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ABSTRACT

This collection of scholarly essays on comparative education is divided into four sections. The first section, Viewpoints/Controversies, contains the essay "Educational Policies and Contents in Developing Countries" (Jacques Hallak). The second section, Open File: Education in Asia, contains the following essays: "Some Current Issues, Concerns and Prospects" (Victor Ordonez; Rupert Maclean); "South Asia and Basic Education: Changing UNICEF's Strategic Perspectives on Educational Development and Partnerships" (Jim Irvine); "Education for Gender Equity: The Lok Jumbish Experience" (Anil Bordia); "Financing Higher Education: Patterns, Trends and Options" (Mark Bray); "Schools That Create Real Roles of Value for Young People" (Roger Holdsworth); and "Educational Priorities and Challenges in the Context of Globalization" (Kamal Malhotra). The third section, Trends/Cases, contains the essay "Higher Education, the Social Sciences and National Development in Nigeria" (Geoffrey I. Nwaka). The last section, Profiles of Famous Educators, contains the profile "Benjamin Bloom, 1913-99" (Elliot W. Eisner). (BT)

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Open File:
Education in Asia

VICTOR ORDONEZ AND RUPERT MACLEAN, EDITORS

Prospects: Quarterly Review of Comparative Education
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EDUCATION IN ASIA

GUEST EDITORS:
VICTOR ORDOÑEZ
AND RUPERT MACLEAN

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Vol. XXX, no. 3, September 2000

VIEWPOINTS/CONTROVERSIES

Educational policies and contents in developing countries — *Jacques Hallak* 277

OPEN FILE: EDUCATION IN ASIA

Some current issues, concerns and prospects — *Victor Ordoñez and Rupert Maclean* 289

South Asia and basic education: changing UNICEF's strategic perspectives on educational development and partnerships — *Jim Irvine* 297

Education for gender equity: the Lok Jumbish experience — *Anil Bordia* 313

Financing higher education: patterns, trends and options — *Mark Bray* 331

Schools that create real roles of value for young people — *Roger Holdsworth* 349

Educational priorities and challenges in the context of globalization — *Kamal Malhotra* 363

TRENDS/CASES

Higher education, the social sciences and national development in Nigeria — *Geoffrey I. Nwaka* 373

PROFILES OF FAMOUS EDUCATORS

Benjamin Bloom, 1913–99 — *Elliot W. Eisner* 387

30 5

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EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND CONTENTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES[1]

Jacques Hallak

Introduction

The subject of this article will be dealt with in six sections. After briefly describing the various ways in which education systems have developed over the last ten years, we will refer to the major factors that have governed the formulation of educational policies, focusing on the approaches adopted for the different educational levels, more particularly in the case of policies relating to content. We will then turn to the new 'demands' and the consequences of globalization, placing special emphasis on the question of policies and content.

The last three sections, which form the nucleus of this article, present in turn:

1. a typological outline of the situation in the different regions of the developing world;
2. a list of areas of concern relating to content and a series of questions regarding: (a) the structures of education systems; (b) education and training methods; and (c) conditions governing the implementation of policies and choices;
3. by way of conclusion, a selective list of questions facing decision-makers and specialists, indicating that, to the best of our knowledge, neither research findings nor experience make it possible to propose clear answers to these questions.

Original language: French

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The development of education systems

QUANTITATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

In the last decade, education systems in the vast majority of developing countries have seen an expansion of enrolments:

1. Since the Jomtien Conference on 'Education for All', considerable efforts have been made both by the developing countries and by international co-operation agencies to promote access to basic education. Special attention has been given to underprivileged groups, the enrolment of girls and migrant populations. Nevertheless, despite the progress made in many countries of South Asia, enrolment rates remain low in some Central American, Caribbean and Andean countries and in most sub-Saharan countries.
2. Countries that have already achieved universal enrolment in primary education have seen a marked increase in secondary enrolments, to begin with in the first cycle, then in the second. The case of Latin America is especially striking in that regard.
3. In many developing countries, particularly in the newly industrialized countries of the Mediterranean, South-East Asia and Latin America, higher education has seen its enrolments more than double in less than ten years.

QUALITATIVE CONDITIONS

Despite these quantitative achievements, observers are in general agreement that the increase in school and university enrolments has usually been accompanied by:

- a decline in educational performance illustrated by low success rates in examinations and significant school wastage rates;
- the persistence of a difficulty—the disparity between the school's and the family's expectations and the needs of society.

In this connection, we find that, in administrative and management procedures, educational authorities favour systemic approaches focusing more on the structures, institutions and resources of education than on its objectives and goals. While advocating an active, child-centred approach, teachers continue to use methods that are more strongly marked by rote learning and the concerns of the leading figures in the national education system than by the demands for education and training emerging from the community. However, a trend towards greater emphasis on the evaluation of learning outcomes can be observed in a number of countries. This emerging trend, which began in the countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), is gradually spreading to the countries of the South thanks to the encouragement of bilateral and multilateral co-operation organizations.

The combined effect of efforts to modify educational approaches and to give priority to the evaluation of learning outcomes may eventually lead to a significant strengthening of education systems.

KEY FACTORS

What are the factors that have contributed to this development? There are several, the most noteworthy of which are:

Budgetary constraints. First, the financial constraint. In many developing countries, it has been necessary at one and the same time to cope with the pressure of school enrolments and the impossibility of increasing (or even of stabilizing) in real terms the resources earmarked for education. This has naturally resulted in a worsening of conditions at school (overcrowded classes, inadequate teaching materials, under-qualified, badly paid and unmotivated teachers) and little flexibility in adapting educational supply to society's new demands.

International aid has played a growing role—at times excessive—in many developing countries. Whatever the level of external financing, it remains modest in comparison with national public resources for education. Nevertheless, by their strategic choices for allocating external funding and by the conditions—often draconian—attached to the granting of funds (gifts and loans), international organizations have played a highly significant role.

Human resources. They consist mainly of teachers and administrative and support staff. Out of some 60 million (a very approximate figure) practising teachers at all levels—excluding China—less than 20% would be able to cope with new responsibilities such as: the supervision and management of courses; the promotion of active, child-centred teaching; or the management of the new teaching tools provided by modern information and communication technologies. As for the administrative and academic supervisory staff, our conclusion can only be that they are not in a position to: (a) oversee the decentralization of resources; (b) regulate the system on a prescriptive and contractual basis; (c) provide academic support to disadvantaged schools; (d) organize consultations between education and the other actors concerned (in particular the world of work); and (e) follow up the achievement of objectives and the use of resources for education, while leaving initiatives outside the public sector to follow their own course.

Educational policies

FACTORS AFFECTING THEIR DEVELOPMENT

Even though there is not always a perfect match between educational policies and the quantitative and qualitative development of schooling, the same factors affect the way in which policies and systems evolve. We should like to mention:

The pre-eminence of economic and financial factors. When resources are limited, policies tend to steer clear of 'disruptions' and 'discontinuities' that could hinder the development of the system and confine their action to dealing with emergencies: absorbing potentially unemployed young people; monitoring examination results; responding to demands from teachers' unions, etc. The accent is clearly on the 'short term'.

The role of external financing bodies. It has greatly changed over the last ten years, allocating less to school buildings and more to the development of institutional capacities and policies.

International conferences. Six world conferences have had an impact on policies: Rio de Janeiro (1992), on the environment, with its Agenda 21; Jomtien (1990), which had the greatest impact on policies promoting basic education; Cairo (1994), which drew attention to population questions; Beijing (1995), which focused attention on efforts to combat discrimination against young girls and women in education; Istanbul (1996), which highlighted the role of municipalities and cities in the organization of education, in particular for migrant population groups; and lastly Copenhagen (1995), which reaffirmed the key role played by education in social development by setting goals for the allocation of resources to the social sector (notably education and health care).

Globalization/regionalization. Two substantive long-term trends gathered momentum during the 1980s: on the one hand, globalization, with the consequent need to implement policies to raise the quality of education in order to train a skilled labour force capable of withstanding international competition; and, on the other hand, through country groupings (European Union, MERCOSUR in Latin America, SADAC in southern Africa, etc.) and the devolution of powers at the international or intranational level, regionalization, which also results in pressure to raise quality by proposing the highest 'standards and norms' in each given geographical region.

The decentralization of administration. The gradual change in methods of organizing education through decentralizing the administration has resulted in the proliferation in a number of countries of regulatory bodies for the management and financing of education, for which convincing reasons are not always readily perceptible. In practice, decentralization, which may be regarded as a means of serving a policy, has become a policy objective in itself in many countries, which has often given rise to growing confusion in framing policies.

NEW PROSPECTS

In spite of everything, a study of the trends shows that new prospects are in the offing:

Priority for basic education. This is a goal that unites nearly all the developing countries. Basic education can be justified ethically (the right to education), socially (equality of opportunity) and economically (the highest rate of return on investment).

Secondary education in search of an identity. With the advent of universal basic education (including, in addition to primary school, the first two years of secondary education), access to secondary education has been diversified and generalized. The vexed question of the purpose of this level of education (whether complete in itself or preparatory to higher education) is as topical as ever.

The new social functions of higher education. In addition to its scientific and economic function in the creation of knowledge and the training of key personnel respectively, higher education is increasingly required to play a social, cultural and ideological role (universalist values, protection of the environment, community activities, etc.).

Education throughout life. With the gathering speed of scientific and technical progress, the rapid obsolescence of qualifications, the lengthening of the lifespan and the reduction in working time, there is in many countries a growing tendency to extend the development of educational policies to the needs of all age groups: working adults and retirees. Regulatory measures (fiscal and academic) are gradually being taken by ministries of education to accompany this development.

OBJECTIVES AND GOALS 'REVISITED': THE FOUR PRINCIPLES PROPOSED BY UNESCO

Against this backdrop, a set of joint concerns is shared by a large number of developing countries. The aim is to comply with the four principles recommended by UNESCO's International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century: learning to be, learning to do, learning to learn and learning to live together.

First, while no one still calls into question the crucial role of education in economic and social development, a challenge nevertheless awaits policy-makers: how can education be reformed to bring it into line with the new demands for insertion in an increasingly 'globalized' world without sacrificing social and cultural development to those demands?

Secondly, the incorporation of scientific and technological advances into education is no more than wishful thinking in many countries, especially the poorest among them. Nevertheless, officials acknowledge that without this incorporation education will rapidly lose its relevance and generate disillusionment among the rising generations of young people emerging from the education system.

Thirdly, the return to values is now a widely shared concern even if it does not yet give rise to very clear political choices. For a growing number of governments, the priorities which should be accorded to universalist values (human rights, environmental protection, health and quality of life) go hand in hand with those to be given to the assertion of cultural identity and the protection of the heritage.

Lastly, the theme of 'education and social cohesion' has become a catchphrase in political dialogue. It stems from the many causes of social division (unemployment, poverty and migration) and from the development of centrifugal pressures (radicalism and fundamentalism, the weakening role of governments, etc.).

STRAINS ON CONTENT: MOUNTING AND CONTRADICTORY DEMANDS

The repercussions of these educational policy developments on the reform of content cannot be underestimated. The term 'content' is used to refer to the training

and retraining of teachers, teaching methods, curricula and teaching materials. Striking a balance between the adaptations of content that are needed to comply with the four UNESCO principles can prove to be very difficult. It entails changes in the curriculum reform processes combined with teacher-training policies and the organization of production of, or access to, updated and revised teaching materials. Two examples will suffice to illustrate the point:

1. The difficulties of timing when new disciplines are introduced. The problem is how to include new areas of knowledge while often having to link them to existing basic disciplines. Where should one begin? What scenario should be followed? Who should do what? Where does the initiative lie? In more practical terms, how can pupils and students in the middle of courses be spared disorder and disruption? How is the operation to be financed? And so on.
2. The adoption of more demanding teaching methods. It is not really possible to comply with the UNESCO principles, in particular 'learning to learn' and 'learning to live together', without a radical change in teaching methods. In many countries, learning is still mainly by rote. The adoption of 'constructivist' methods or, more radically still, of child-centred learning in which the pupil becomes an 'actor' in the learning process requires not only major retraining of the teaching staff but also a command of new teaching aids and new standards of evaluation whose development will cause further difficulties for many countries. Learning to live together naturally implies changes in the implicit and explicit contents and in the way in which school life is organized. As we are all aware, it is by practising citizenship and democracy in the classroom and at school that we can become upholders of democracy in adult life. This is an ambitious programme for those responsible for content reform, but it is beginning to be applied in practice in an admittedly small but growing number of countries.

Globalization

DEFINITION

The phenomenon of globalization is the result of the interlocking of the economic and financial sectors at the global level. It was made possible by:

- the speed and scale of technological progress, particularly in the field of information and communication technologies;
- geopolitical upheavals, notably the collapse of the Eastern 'bloc' and the emergence of economic groupings of nations (European Union, MERCOSUR, etc.);
- a prevailing ideology based on regulation by market forces, applied initially to economic and financial exchanges and gradually extended to all other sectors of human activity, including the social sector (education, health care, etc.).

It is by this means that an approach based on a higher return on capital, combined with the possibility of locating units for the production of goods and services almost anywhere in the world, has contributed to the process of articulation and globalization.

SOME CONSEQUENCES

The essential consequences of the phenomenon of globalization include:

- the emergence of 'knowledge societies' as a result of the proliferation of information and communication sources;
- the transformation of the nature of work, mainly owing to the need for greater flexibility and mobility, the importance of communication technologies, the need for teamwork and the more intensive use of modern technologies;
- the increase in social exclusion because much of the world's population cannot fit into society because they are unemployed, badly employed or earn low wages.

GLOBALIZATION LEADS TO DEVELOPMENTS THAT ARE HIGHLY BENEFICIAL TO SOCIETY

For example:

The exchange of experience about educational policies. A faster pace of exchange and lower transport costs have led to an increase in the ways and means available for exchanging experience on educational policies. Some twenty years ago, the International Conference on Education offered the only opportunity for dialogue and exchange in this field (with the exception of the UNESCO regional conferences of ministers of education). Nowadays there are innumerable channels for co-ordinating policies and the Internet has produced a dramatic increase in the number of policy exchange forums.

The convergence of curricula. The findings of many studies carried out in the early 1990s confirmed the hypothesis that the concepts of 'appropriate forms and contents' are widely shared by an increasing number of countries, largely as a result of the work of international organizations for educational co-operation and exchanges of experience in matters of policy. Some researchers go even further by pointing out that comparative studies show a high degree of similarity in primary school curricula in different countries. Even the definitions of success and failure in studies, teaching methods, optimum levels of enrolment and class size are the subject of a growing consensus. The emergence of what might be called 'common curricula' at the international level, however, is still only a hypothesis based on trends—a product of the globalization process. And the idea of 'common curricula' does not mean that there is no room for national and local features. This convergence—which is only partly suggested by some studies—if confirmed, would be an interesting contribution by globalization to a better quality of education (minimum standards) and its closer adaptation to the needs of contemporary societies.

The convergence of areas of concern. The most striking aspect for an observer is the growing convergence of educational policies (priorities, choices) and strategies at world level. The list of such policies and strategies is familiar to educational professionals. It runs as follows: (a) to give priority to questions relat-

ing to access, quality and relevance, such as gender equality, the effectiveness of resource allocation and also the empowerment, participation, collaboration and mobilization of all the stakeholders in the education sector; (b) to progress from system-based education to teaching-oriented and pupil-centred education; (c) to adopt criteria for resource allocation based on results rather than costs alone, giving priority to basic education; (d) to advance from teaching based exclusively on rote learning to more active and participatory strategies that take into account the specific needs of learners and the nature of their local environment.

Regional approaches

There is something of a paradox in the relationship between globalization and education: on the one hand, globalization heightens the need for education and training, together with the social demand for them; on the other, the adverse effects of globalization make it increasingly difficult for a growing number of countries to finance their educational development in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Globalization being closely bound up with the neo-liberal principle of market freedom and reducing the role of the State, its development goes hand in hand with a reduction in public expenditure. In many countries, globalization has taken the form of increased public debt and adjustment measures that have seriously affected the financing of education. Not only has per capita educational expenditure declined in many countries (this is the case for approximately two-thirds of the countries of Africa and Latin America) but also the percentage of the state budget allocated to education has fallen. As a consequence, there have been spectacular collapses in school enrolment.

At a time when globalization has made education a central feature of development, countries rich and poor are finding it progressively more difficult to maintain, much less increase, the resources available for education. As a gross simplification we could say that some countries are 'failing' and others are 'succeeding'. The former group is in a *vicious circle*, the latter in a *virtuous circle*. The successful countries began in a strong position in terms of human resources, managed to enter the world economy and increased their earnings and their resources for education, i.e. they improved their international competitiveness. The others—the failures—began in a position marked by low school enrolment and poor-quality education. They were cut off from the globalization process, and lacking resources for education, became increasingly marginalized and vulnerable. The former are 'surfing' on globalization while the latter seem incapable of resisting the tide of failure that is sweeping them along or of finding a strategy capable of integrating them into a world that has become global.

Naturally, no geographical region has a monopoly on one or other of these positions. But we can describe—in broad, sweeping terms—what is happening in different developing regions.

- *Africa* is probably dominated by the vicious circle. Apart from a few notable exceptions, its position has been made worse by a colonial experience whose

effects are still being felt. In Africa, school is not the product of domestic development. The result is a divide that has significant consequences: the continent is marked by split societies, dysfunctional economies and citizens torn between a majority lifestyle relegated to the status of tradition and treated ahistorically, and a minority Westernized lifestyle vaunted as a symbol of modernity, evolving towards 'civilization' and scientific and technological progress. The only way out of this crisis of social schizophrenia is to reform the school system by redirecting learning processes towards local socio-economic realities, cultures and languages and by reviving endogenous potential (knowledge and practice).

- *Latin America* combines and superimposes the two circles. In some states of Brazil and Mexico, several provinces of Argentina and some regions in other nations, the virtuous circle can be seen at work. This is not the case, however, in most of the subcontinent. Thanks to the vitality of some areas, the most striking trend is towards the 'diffusion' of successful ventures at the regional level. This could result—should the trend be confirmed—in an improvement in the situation on the subcontinent. A question mark remains, however: the successful ventures—whether economic or in the field of education and training—are still based on the standards and practices of the industrialized countries (mainly the United States of America and, more rarely, Europe). Is a development of this kind sustainable in the long term?
- *The Mediterranean* is a very heterogeneous area, with a large number of specific needs. However, in the countries bordering on the Mediterranean and beyond, throughout Western Europe, globalization seems to be fostering the need to strengthen the role of education as a factor of regional cohesion. To this end, a number of regional projects are attempting to promote 'common contents' with two goals: integration into the globalization process and the urgent need to 'live together'. The task facing education officials is a difficult but inescapable one: that of emphasizing in the teaching process universalist and common values, while safeguarding the cultural specificities of communities and nations and promoting the training of qualified human resources to participate in development.
- *Asia*, which is more 'dense' than the other continents combined, compounds on a large scale the symptoms of both the virtuous and the vicious circles of globalization. Most of the world's illiterates, most of the people who have never attended school and education systems that are irrelevant, inefficient and of poor quality are to be found in Asia. Yet it is also in Asia that the most spectacular efforts are being made to achieve integration into the global system, in both the economy and education. The recent crises that have affected a good number of countries in the region demonstrate the shortcomings of 'superficial' integration and bring out the promising nature of mixed approaches that combine the need to protect national cultural identities and the need for integration into the globalization process. Clear illustrations of all the main regional tendencies are to be found in Asia.

A list of areas of concern

Over the last two years, UNESCO's International Bureau of Education has launched a major international co-operation programme. This programme includes two components: (a) learning to live together by including the question of coexistence in educational content; and (b) adapting this content to the need to meet a number of challenges raised by a globalized world. The programme will be implemented by setting up regional co-operation networks. To that end, regional consultations (seminars, workshops and surveys) have been held in Beijing, Buenos Aires, Geneva, Malta and New Delhi. They attempted to identify a converging concern in all the countries consulted—namely, the need for the authorities to reform the content of education in order to meet the challenges of technological, social, economic, political, national and global development, while respecting the obligation to take into account the universalist objectives of education in curriculum design, teacher training and textbook production.

For a clearer presentation of the questions identified by the IBE, we have grouped them into three sections:

QUESTIONS RELATING TO STRUCTURES

- Formal basic education and the alternatives: what kinds of equivalence? (It is unacceptable that alternatives should be regarded as education on the cheap.)
- Levels or cycles: how can gaps be limited? The key problem in any reform of content is to ensure a 'cumulative' effect between cycles and levels.
- Secondary education as a complete or a preparatory course: is there a need for common contents and skills? If so, which?
- Initial training and continuing training: is it possible to develop the concept of transdisciplinary skills in order to attain lifelong learning?

QUESTIONS RELATING TO METHODS

- How can curricular frameworks be designed which combine the need to respond to national and global changes and to local features?
- How can systems with 'uniform contents' be replaced by flexible systems combining 'knowledge and skills' so that learners can specialize while developing their ability to adapt to new situations?
- How can new disciplines be introduced within existing disciplines (e.g. the environment) or in addition to existing disciplines (e.g. foreign languages)?
- What are the basic skills needed to ensure a balance between initial and continuing training? In particular, how can initial training programmes be modified so as to stimulate the demand for 'learning throughout life'?
- What can be done to correct overloaded curricula (too many subjects, disciplines and pressures from lobbies seeking to introduce novel subjects so as to

take into account new needs) and poor timing of the introduction of new disciplines into the education cycles?
- How can the role of teachers be redefined in the educational context of a new division of tasks between teachers and pupils?

QUESTIONS RELATING TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Who is responsible for what in educational content? (There is growing confusion in the distribution of responsibilities as a result of the proliferation of actors/stakeholders, the decentralization of education and the tendency to limit the role of ministries and to increase that of schools, teachers and local actors.)
- How can policy decisions be kept at the centre, while promoting consultation with the actors on policy choices and decentralizing responsibility for implementation to the local level?
- What practical steps can be taken to ensure co-ordination between ministries of education and other ministries (labour, industry, etc.) for the organization of the training and retraining of the labour force as new activities arise and others disappear?
- How can teachers' forums be organized so as to apply content frameworks in schools?
- What new distribution of tasks is needed between trainers and the new technologies? (If the tendency to use new technologies more intensively in education is confirmed—in particular the use of CD-ROMs and on-line teaching and training on the Internet—what will the role of teachers be and how should they be trained for their new responsibilities?)

Real questions, uncertain replies

In conclusion, we shall present a set of questions that, in our view, are at the top of the agenda for those who are to address the reform of educational contents in the next few years.

1. *Africa.* How can learning processes be redirected towards local socio-economic realities, cultures and language—the continent's endogenous potential? One of the conditions for this is that grassroots communities should take back responsibility for education in terms of both knowledge and practice, since it is through the interaction between school and the environment that pupils develop the ability to internalize and adapt external or universal inputs and thus enter actively into the globalization process.
2. *Latin America.* What steps can be taken to strengthen the capacity to implement the changes decided by the public authorities in spite of the shortage of resources, the inadequacy of infrastructures and equipment, the insufficient qualifications of teachers, the lack of a management culture within the education system, and the poor quality of institutional learning processes in a continent rich in information, knowledge, experience and inspiration?

3. *The Mediterranean.* Here, there is a wide choice of possibilities. Has the time now come to teach 'living together' by seeking what is 'common' to the countries of the region? Can a link between science and religion be envisaged in education? How can a deep attachment to the endogenous be combined with insertion in the universal?
4. *Asia.* Enthusiasm for information and communication technologies, together with the introduction of lifelong learning which is already under way in various Asian countries, will shortly raise the problem of the compatibility of the growing multinationalization and privatization of methods, and the development of 'unofficial curricula' and cross-border materials, with the necessity of regulation by the public authorities, whose duty it is to ensure equity, quality, respect for values and the maintenance of social cohesion in a spirit of conciliation between the global and the local.

Note

1. This text was originally presented as a speech at the international symposium on 'Curriculum et contenus d'enseignement dans un monde en mutation: permanence et rupture', Centre universitaire de recherche en sciences de l'éducation et physiologie (CURSEP), Amiens, France, 12 January 2000.

EDUCATION IN ASIA

SOME CURRENT ISSUES, CONCERNS AND PROSPECTS

Victor Ordoñez and Rupert Maclean

Introduction

The region of Asia, which is to home to almost 60% of the world's population, is outstanding for the vast range of diversities that encompass almost all aspects of life, whether geographical, socio-economic, cultural, political or developmental.

In the region there are countries of vast landmasses (China, India and Australia) and also island countries lying in expansive ocean areas (the Maldives). Countries with the largest populations (China—almost 1.3 billion; India—1 billion) and the most rapidly growing mega-cities are to be found in the region, as are countries with relatively small populations (Bhutan, 600,000). The levels of economic development also vary widely, with some of the richest countries (such as Japan) and some of the poorest countries on Earth (such as Bangladesh)

Some of the major education problems currently facing mankind are evident in the region. For instance, there are estimated to be 625 million illiterates in Asia: 71% of the world's total, of whom 64% are women and girls.

Original language: English

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A few of the disparities that exist in Asia are particularly disturbing. For example, in South Asia the literacy rate is 42% compared with 72% in East and South-East Asia; in South Asia, life expectancy is ten years lower than for those living in East and South-East Asia.

In Asia, some 74 million of the world's total 132 million children (or 56% of the school-age population, 6–11 years old) are not enrolled in primary education. Of those who enrol, at least one-third abandon or drop out before completing the primary cycle. The reasons are compelling and well known: poverty, social exclusion, socio-economic gaps, urban–rural disparities, rampant mismanagement and lack of adequate education programmes. Moreover, gender disparities make the picture look bleaker: of the out-of-school children in the region, some 46 million (62%) are girls, concentrated especially in South Asia.

In spite of such challenges and diversity there is a common thread in that all countries in Asia and the Pacific believe that in order to achieve poverty eradication, sustainable human development, justice and equity in all respects, there is a need to make greater efforts to improve the quality, effectiveness and relevance of education and schooling. The reform and re-engineering of education and schooling is receiving increasing attention from governments in the region, particularly in the less developed countries.

Some key educational issues in the region

The rate and nature of educational development varies significantly in the different Asian countries, the challenge being for countries to formulate realistic priorities and address specific concerns that are most relevant to their needs and their pace of development.

At the second meeting of the Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Education in Asia and the Pacific (organized by UNESCO Bangkok, 8–10 November 1998), countries indicated that the most pressing areas for action are:

- the provision of basic education services with particular reference to the needs of marginalized and under-served groups, such as girls, women, minorities, refugees, the disadvantaged and learners with special needs;
- enhancement of community participation, including the ownership of schools and training institutions;
- development of effective education strategies and schemes for poverty reduction;
- improvement of education quality and learning achievements, accompanied by expansion of access to education;
- promotion of greater attention to the pivotal role of teachers as agents for educational progress and social change;
- utilization and dissemination of the new information and communication technologies, including the production and use of indigenous software, and expanding access to the Internet;
- greater attention to the needs of youth with particular regard to meeting their educational needs in terms of providing a high-quality, relevant and diverse

secondary education, since this is a key factor for social and economic development;

- support for the moral curriculum, including international and values education; and
- expansion of higher education, because although for many countries in the region the major challenge remains increasing access and participation in basic education, for more advanced countries continued productivity improvements and technological progress demand increasingly sophisticated education and training, including at the tertiary level.

The emphasis which particular countries place on these matters depends upon their level of development and the particular priorities of government. In addition, even when countries achieve some progress in strengthening and upgrading their education systems in areas such as those referred to here, it remains to be determined whether progress is broad enough in scope and depth to be sustainable.

While all of these areas of education are important (to varying degrees) to countries in Asia, the area that is drawing special attention at the current time is Education for All (EFA). This is reflected by the fact that over the past two years, in collaboration with the various United Nations agencies, forty-four countries from Asia and the Pacific have worked to put together comprehensive national assessment reports on the progress and state of education in the region. And the results emerging from the EFA 2000 Assessment, as it is called, are mixed, showing both positive and negative trends on the region's education front.

Ever since the historic World Conference on Education for All, held at Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990, basic education has been back on the priority lists of governments and in the minds of the general public. This advocacy has led to a proliferation of legislation, programmes and projects, and in the early 1990s to even an increase in the levels of resource allocation.

But all the awareness and goodwill, and all the projects, resources and activities that followed it, were not fully rewarded with the desired results. The literacy rates in some countries of the region remain amongst the highest in the world. But universal primary education continues to remain elusive even in countries with high participation rates. The gap between girls' and boys' education, between male and female literacy, remains a huge problem; unlocking additional resources to cope with the inevitable increase in demand remains a challenge.

Data from the Asian countries in the first half of the decade showed an almost exclusive focus on the formal primary system. But in the last five years the expanded vision of EFA, propagated by the Jomtien Conference, is finally taking hold.

In almost all countries, even where access remains a serious problem, there is a major shift in focus from schooling to learning. There is a growing realization that Enrolment for All is not the same as Education for All. This has two significant consequences.

First, it means that mainstream education cannot hope to address all learning needs and must be accompanied by alternative, tailor-made, non-formal learning methods. As a result of this understanding, nations such as Indonesia, the Philippines

and India are experimenting with systems in which participants in non-formal programmes are allowed to cross laterally into the formal system. And as the non-formal sector becomes more formalized, as it were, conversely the formal sector is becoming more informal or less rigid, adopting mother tongues in the first few years or incorporating an eight-week pre-school package at the start of the primary cycle, as in the Philippines.

Second, it means that enrolling children in a formal system does not guarantee that their learning needs will be met. Recent achievement test results show an alarming percentage of pupils who have been in the school system three years or more who still have not mastered the basic skills of reading and writing.

Policy-makers are also slowly getting over the—sometimes false—dichotomy of quantity versus quality. Under this dichotomy, when budgets are limited, one must often choose between more textbooks and facilities for those already in school (quality) or additional buildings and teachers for those not yet in the system (quantity). The drive towards universal primary education in Asia has tended to favour quantity or expanded access. But several countries in South Asia, for example, have reported that more schools do not necessarily translate into more educated students. This is because there is low participation and attendance when the school is perceived to be of little relevance or low quality. Paradoxically, paying attention to quality enhances quantity; providing trained and motivated teachers, adequate learning materials, and most of all curricular content that meets the needs and aspirations of the local communities is the best way to guarantee expanded and sustained school attendance.

When listing impediments to progress, almost every country mentions financial resource constraints. Yet there is a change of focus here that was not evident a decade ago. Whereas the emphasis used to be the push for more money to do basically more of the same, it seems to have shifted to how to make better use of the money already available.

Some of the factors impelling or impeding progress towards the goal of education for all also have socio-cultural roots. On the negative side, misguided or unenlightened interpretations of an aspect of a specific sub-culture sometimes hamper the push for girls' education and the efforts to provide education to ethnic and religious minorities.

On the positive side, the fundamental value given to education, to respect for elders, sages and teachers, the central role of the family, and the implicit faith in the importance of educating the next generation are common across the great cultures of Asia. This accounts for the continuing high levels of participation in East Asia in spite of the economic crisis, and in Central Asia in spite of the government setbacks in the course of transition to a market economy. Plotting a strategy of action for the next ten years must take into account these socio-cultural factors.

The data emerging from the assessment of education in Asia and the Pacific show that if the goal of universal primary education is to be met, national budgets must introduce dramatic, quantum leaps in allocation to primary education, doubling or tripling this allocation over a few years; the responsibility for financing primary

education must shift, with all its pitfalls, to communities, the private sector, religious groups, NGOs or parents; non-formal education programmes will have to be designed to assume a greater and more integral role in the public education system; and a breakthrough in the design of primary school delivery systems must take place that effectively brings the cost per student down to a fraction of its current cost.

Ten years ago, the Jomtien Conference declared to the world that EFA is necessary—as a fundamental human right, as an essential building block to development and peace. The past decade has proved to the world, through glimpses of success in different countries, that EFA is indeed possible. The exciting decade ahead, with all its complexities, makes EFA more important than ever, and because of this it is time to tell the world that it is not only necessary and possible, it is also urgent and achievable.

Open File on 'Education in Asia'

The articles which appear in this Open File on 'Education in Asia' deal with some of the key issues and concerns referred to here. These are currently being addressed by governments, education policy-makers and practitioners as they seek to re-engineer their education systems to achieve sustainable human development, poverty eradication and equity in all respects, through improving the quality, relevance and effectiveness of schooling.

In his paper on basic education in South Asia, Jim Irvine, the UNICEF Regional Education Adviser for East Asia and the Pacific, examines the recent shifts in UNICEF's strategic perspective with regard to achieving basic education for all. As previously noted, South Asia has the lowest literacy rates and life expectancy in Asia, and the majority of the region's poor live in this sub-region. In terms of inequalities in access to basic education, South Asia faces special problems: there are relatively low levels of resource allocation in support of basic education, and other problems (compounded by legacies of feudal, fundamentalist and colonial traditions that foster discrimination, corruption, exploitation and patriarchy) act to retard achieving the realization of women's and children's rights. As Irvine clearly shows, such problems have contributed to a major rethinking of the UNICEF strategy with regard to achieving EFA.

The matter of achieving gender equity is of special importance throughout the region since women and girls are the single most disadvantaged group when it comes to lack of access to high-quality and adequate resources in the areas of education and social welfare. Even when education facilities are available, marginalized women and girls are often provided with a type of education which de-motivates them. It also does not benefit them in any sense to obtain the knowledge, skills and understandings necessary for them to achieve a real change in their economic and social status. In his paper, Anil Bordia reviews the complexities of gender equity and examines the major hurdles that currently exist in India and which make gender equity a difficult matter to achieve. A major breakthrough in this regard has been made by the Lok Jumbish Project in Rajasthan, which has been successful in promoting

functional literacy amongst adolescent girls from poor agricultural communities. As such, this project has been effective in initiating measures for mobilizing the masses, particularly women, so that they can reflect upon and analyse their current predicament and in so doing move in an organized and effective way to achieve empowerment through education. The case study provided by Bordia demonstrates that women's empowerment and effective moves to achieve gender equity through education are possible and can be sustainable in a cost-effective way.

One of the key concerns of governments as they examine the expansion of formal education to provide universal access and the provision of high-quality education is that of finance. Many less developed countries in Asia are struggling with an enormous burden of debt and the great demands placed on their limited income to improve the social and economic welfare of their people. The problem of 'limited income' but 'unlimited economic wants', along with the priorities of governments, is a reality which often results in insufficient funds being allocated to expand education facilities. It is because of such financial pressures that the financing of education has become a matter of considerable debate throughout the Asian region, with particular reference to such matters as private versus public funding of education.

Mark Bray examines the matter of financing education in Asia with regard to higher education. It is interesting that as countries in the region seek to achieve universal literacy, the universalization of primary education and EFA, many are at the same time also trying to expand access to, and achieve quality assurance regarding, their systems of higher education. This is not surprising since both the first and third levels of education are of considerable importance with regard to the ongoing economic and social development of countries.

There is considerable diversity in the region with regard to the coverage of higher education. As countries in the region which have relatively low participation rates in post-secondary education seek to achieve expanded access (while at the same time maintaining or improving quality assurance) there has often been an expansion in the non-governmental financing of higher education. Bray examines the different schemes being used to finance higher education in various countries in the region, and the implications for the numerous vested interest groups.

The paper by Roger Holdsworth examines the important matter of the education of youth. Holdsworth argues that as young people stay in school for longer and longer periods of time, most of the activities in which they are engaged place them in passive roles, removed from the 'real world'. The outcomes of these activities are increasingly deferred, with regard to getting a job in the future or else being prepared for citizenship. While for some young people these deferred outcomes will be delivered, for many others a changed youth labour market means that distant outcomes are seen to be illusory. As a result, increasing numbers of students are becoming cynical and restless: their schools do not recognize that students have views and roles of value, and the message conveyed to students is that they cannot make a difference to their world. Holdsworth's paper addresses these issues by drawing on practical examples from Australian (and other) schools in which attempts are being made to create roles of real value for young people—roles that link them to their

communities. These examples, in primary and secondary schools, place students in partnership roles as decision-makers regarding their own and others' education, and have both governance and curriculum implications.

The final paper, by Kamal Malhotra, examines the challenges posed for education during a time of globalization, and the development and increasing utilization of the new information and communication technologies (ITCs). He argues that the ITCs that have swept through Asia over the past decade have brought benefits but have also contributed to widening the gap between the rich and the poor, those who are empowered and those who are marginalized, both within and between countries in the region. Malhotra encourages us to rethink the relationship between the new information technologies and education in order to ensure that ICTs are most effectively harnessed to help achieve sustainable development, poverty eradication and equity in all respects through improving the quality, relevance and effectiveness of education and schooling.

* * *

The Asian region is large and diverse and so there are a multitude of educational issues that are of importance and concern to the millions of individuals, thousands of communities and dozens of countries in the region. It is not possible in this short Open File to deal with the myriad of matters that are attracting the attention of such individuals and groups throughout the region. However, we have sought to identify some matters which are of special importance at the current time, in order to convey the essential flavour of issues and concerns regarding 'Education in Asia'.

SOUTH ASIA AND BASIC EDUCATION: CHANGING UNICEF's STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Jim Irvine

Introduction

Underlying the observable disparities in human development in South Asia are gross inequalities in access to resources, compounded by legacies of feudal, fundamentalist and colonial traditions that actively foster discrimination, corruption, exploitation and patriarchy. The realization of women's and children's rights (as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, or CRC, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, or CEDAW) must address these realities.

Original language: English

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South Asian governments (except Afghanistan) are committed to the goal of education for all. Global, regional and national initiatives, such as the World Summit for Children (1990), the World Conference on Education for All (1990) and the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) Decade of the Girl Child have encouraged a continuing focus on this commitment during the past decade. Budgetary allocations, long-term loans and progress during the 1990s in increased primary school enrolments reflect this commitment. Several relatively recent shifts in UNICEF's strategic perspective on basic education are discernible.

Moving from 'needs' to unrealized 'rights'

Throughout the early 1990s, UNICEF support was often associated with supplies, funding of short-course training programmes, and working through NGOs to expand access to basic education in both the formal and non-formal sectors. The focus was primarily on access, with less attention to issues related to quality and sustainability.

Throughout this access-goals era up to the mid-1990s, programme managers and systems largely decided what schools and teachers needed, invariably reflected as top-down, input investments (e.g. facilities, furniture, equipment, infrastructure, systems, curricula reform and materials, teacher training, conditions). As primary education access has expanded, attention has increasingly turned to the unrealized rights of the millions of South Asian children denied any form of basic education, owing to cultural and familial prejudice, gender bias, full-time work, minority/migrant/refugee/nomadic group status, isolation, emergencies and conflict, disability, or effects of HIV/AIDS.

Rights programming at the level of concepts, language, networks of rights activists, and plans of action has been changing since 1996, when UNICEF required country offices to move from a basic needs to a child rights approach to programming. Translating rights programming into activities that are genuinely participatory in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation is proving very time-consuming and difficult.

Realizing the survival, growth, development and participation rights of those children hitherto denied education will be much more expensive and more time-consuming for each percentage gain in access than the unit cost of schooling for the majority. Actualizing these rights will require new thinking, skills, partners and ways of working that depart from traditional centre-driven, top-down, input-focused programming. Some of the features of rights programming require highest-level advocacy (political choices such as military versus social sector spending), combined with local-level work (empowered communities that ensure the provision of services and the fair allocation of resources).

Expanding coverage within a goals focus, while addressing quality processes, is pushing UNICEF into new ways of thinking and working. Conceptually, a rights approach to programming offers new challenges to many of the traditional ways in which development goals have been pursued. Some of these differences have been succinctly summarized by Jonsson (1997).

TABLE 1. Needs versus rights

Needs approach	Rights approach
Child is a passive recipient	Child is an active participant
Needs imply goals, including partial goals e.g. '90% of girls enrolled in primary school'	Rights imply goals, always 100% e.g.'10% of girls are denied their right to schooling'
Needs can be met without sustainability	Rights must be met with sustainability
Needs can be ranked in a hierarchy	Rights cannot be hierarchically organized
Needs do not necessarily imply duties	Rights imply duties
Needs are associated with promises	Rights are associated with obligations
Needs may vary among cultures	Rights are universal
Needs can be met through charity	Charity is not acceptable in a rights approach
Meeting needs often depends on 'political will'	Realizing rights depends on 'political choice'

Source: Jonsson, 1997

Moving from 'access' to 'access with quality': quality classroom processes

Widespread gains in primary enrolments (in terms of both absolute numbers and proportions) throughout Asia and the Pacific have encouraged increased attention to quality issues, impact and processes at the school and the classroom levels. Variable quality is reflected in variable participation figures, continuing high rates of cohort-flow inefficiency, continuing repetition and drop–out (especially in the early 'survival' grades and in upper primary 'examination' grades), and low levels of learning achievement.

UNICEF country programmes now appreciate that investments in enabling conditions (inputs) do not necessarily lead to the desired impact and longer-term outcomes without more serious attention to facilitating conditions (quality of classroom teaching/learning processes). There is increased attention to quality processes at the cluster, school and classroom levels.

UNICEF country offices have assisted with a checklist for professional support visits, as a basis for identifying observable features and discussing options for teachers to improve the quality of the teaching/learning environment and the teaching/learning processes. More than 200 classrooms have contributed data to the Regional Office to help refine such an instrument. Work continues to evolve, refine and use this classroom observation/teacher feedback tool (the South Asia Classroom Observation Schedule) to complement ongoing efforts in all South Asian countries to assess learning achievements, to understand how to enhance life skills, and to undertake continuous assessment of children's mastery of basic competencies.

This access focus was readily apparent at mid-decade meetings to review progress towards the Jomtien Expanded Vision. At the Mid-Decade Review of

Progress Towards Education for All (Amman, Jordan, June 1996), for example, there was no information on four of the six Jomtien 'Target Dimensions' (early childhood care or ECC, learning achievement, adolescent life skills, and better living/'third channel'), despite valiant efforts and massive expenditures in South Asian countries to assess, analyse and improve basic education in all six Target Dimensions. Clearly, until 1996, the major focus was primary education and adult literacy—a restricted vision of what had been agreed to at Jomtien.

Various national, regional and global meetings between 1990 and 1996 expected countries to report progress. In hindsight, most countries were not in any position to report collated and comprehensively analysed annual figures. In response to frequent reporting pressures, the practice of submitting estimates became entrenched to the point that no country would feel comfortable about reporting figures that did not show progress since the last reporting obligation: a practice that was fostered by the annual reporting expectations to UNESCO.

The acceptance of official gender-disaggregated single figures to represent status on derived indicators, consistent with annual reporting requirements on education statistics to UNESCO, still persists in global documents such as *World education report*, *Progress of nations* and *State of the world's children*. The EFA partners' responsibility to define indicators and provide technical guidelines for EFA progress reporting was not addressed by the EFA Forum until late 1997, and only completed in mid-1998.

The serious consequences of these reporting practices were highlighted at the Amman meeting (June 1996) and the SAARC Ministerial Meeting (Rawalpindi, August 1996), where inaccurate, inconsistent or inflated figures for primary school enrolments in South Asia (Table 2) underpinned conclusions about the status of children's access to primary schooling in the region.

TABLE 2. Net enrolment ratio: a comparison of some official figures for South Asia

	Amman UNESCO June 1996		Rawalpindi SAARC August 1996		EFA 2000 assessment reports*	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boy	Girls
Bangladesh	89	78	82	82	80	83
Bhutan	57	15	58	47	58	48
India	98	76	98	76	78	64
Maldives	–	–	100	100	93	92
Nepal	80	46	81	62	79	60
Pakistan	36	25	71	46	58	40
Sri Lanka	100	100	100	100	95	95

* 2000 EFA NER national averages were derived from aggregated sub-national figures.
Source: UNESCO, 1996; South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (August 1996); World Forum on Education for All, 2000.

Mid-decade estimates were variable, and in some cases clearly inflated. Year 2000 comparisons should not be made with these mid-decade figures, as the EFA 2000 Assessment computed the national figures from the sub-national enrolment and population figures. To educators familiar with the situation in the various South Asian countries, the EFA 2000 Assessment data appear to be more realistic.

The practice of reporting a national average in meetings that took place between 1990 and 1998 encouraged inflated estimates of 'official' figures for indicators such as gross enrolment ratio (GER), net enrolment ratio (NER) and primary school completion or survival rates. Often quoted to two decimal places, these estimates may not have been based on any underlying, verifiable, sub-national data.

The 1996 *Atlas of South Asian children and women* (UNICEF, Regional Office for South Asia) reflected this situation at mid-decade. It was hampered by the limited availability of data, particularly at sub-national levels. Very few indicators were addressed (GER, adult literacy, primary school completion). Much of the information base was outdated.

Many lessons were learned from compiling the Atlas. There is limited value in depicting high-population states, provinces or regions by a single figure, when variability *within* each country is known to be much greater than variability *between* countries. Sub-national, geo-coded district boundary files that have been completed for every South Asian country are accessible from UNICEF's regional database 'Child Info'.

End-of-decade reporting obligations (e.g. South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation; World Forum on Education for All, 2000; Year 2000 Revised Regional Atlas; World Summit for Children, 2001; Country Situation Analyses) provide fresh opportunities to map the situation of children and women in South Asia on key indicators at sub-national levels, preferably down to the district level. This is planned for derived EFA indicators. *EFA 2000 assessment: technical guidelines* provided templates for calculation of the eighteen core indicators and encouraged countries to align this work with regular reporting of education statistics, based on aggregations of data from sub-national administrative units.

If end-decade reporting is not statistically verifiable and reported in terms of trends, ranges, spread and central tendency, the billions of dollars of investment in basic education will not be reflected in accurate pictures of impact, coverage and variability. The EFA 2000 Assessment received priority attention throughout UNICEF as an opportunity to establish more accurate and useful benchmarks for improved targeting of resources.

Learning achievement: moving from examinations to other forms of assessment

All South Asian countries have been addressing learning achievement. In most cases, children's learning has been traditionally assessed through end-of-year and end-of-cycle examinations. Increasingly this is done using end-of-cycle assessments of functional literacy, numeracy and life skills (e.g. 'Assessment of Basic Competencies', or ABC, studies; baseline studies of functional literacy, numeracy and life skills).

UNICEF has supported the 'Monitoring Learning Achievement' (MLA) Project jointly funded by UNICEF and UNESCO. MLA has expanded to more than forty countries globally. Sri Lanka was one of the earlier countries to adopt the MLA methodology.

The MLA team in Sri Lanka assessed a comprehensive, district-representative sample of children who had completed four years of schooling on dimensions of functional literacy, functional numeracy and life skills. It was surprising, in a country with a long tradition of universal enrolment in primary schooling, that the overall results were generally disappointing and highly variable throughout the country. Children in small, rural schools struggled with tasks that required application of basic skills to real-life situations—essentially problem-solving weaknesses.

Similar findings were reported from the ABC studies done in the period 1993–1995. These addressed learning achievement by a series of tasks within the domains of functional literacy, functional numeracy and life skills. The latter tapped children's knowledge of basic health and social responsibility. The ABC tasks were considered representative of basic minimum competencies that children of 11 or 12 years of age should be able to demonstrate. These studies, and the District Primary Education Programme Baseline Studies in India, have highlighted the inability of the majority of South Asian children in government schools to translate school learning to life-relevant task simulations, even after four or five years of school instruction.

Given these concerns to address life-relevance and learning achievements, several countries completed learning achievement studies in 1999 for Year 2000 EFA Reporting (Indicator 15), so as to examine trends over time, variability within countries, and instructional effectiveness. UNICEF is supporting this initiative throughout South Asia.

Identifying those children who have not mastered particular competencies needs to be a daily task of all teachers, not one that waits for annual examinations or end-of-primary-cycle studies. Continuous assessments should point to remedial measures for delayed or absent children, enrichment activities for 'faster' children, and daily adjustments to pacing, teaching strategies and materials.

This emerging culture of continuous classroom assessment is mirrored in some countries by minimum learning levels (e.g. India) or essential learning competencies (e.g. Sri Lanka) against which the progress of individual children can be regularly monitored. Regular monitoring of children's mastery of basic skills is not part of most South Asian primary teachers' experiential or training backgrounds.

Clearly, strategies are needed to encourage and reinforce regular classroom-level monitoring, in the interests of ensuring that children never fall behind or see themselves as failing. A child's self-perception as a 'failing student' in South Asian schools generally leads to him or her being forced to repeat grades or to drop out. Clearly, there is a major challenge to encourage teachers to understand, use and refine strategies for regularly monitoring the progress of individual children in preference to teaching for examinations.

Primary teacher education and support: searching for better professional solutions

It is proving difficult to change the approach to government primary teacher training in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Teacher training in Afghanistan has effectively collapsed. Many pre-service education instructors are men who have never taught in a primary school. They resort to lecture/examination methods, do not use participatory strategies with their students, and serve as poor models for trainees, who enter their careers knowing only teacher-centred methodologies. Additionally, a satisfactory career structure in primary teaching, and opportunities and incentives for further academic and professional studies have yet to emerge.

Compounding this serious situation are several realities in much of the region. There are very large numbers of untrained teachers, especially in rural areas. There is an acute shortage of trained women teachers to serve as role models to encourage girls to enrol and continue their schooling beyond the primary cycle. There are professional and administrative impediments to employing talented, committed, local young people who interact well with children but may not have the necessary academic or professional qualifications to be formally accredited as teachers.

Successful large NGOs have addressed this latter area as a priority. Some have chosen as their teachers committed local adults or adolescents who enjoy interacting with children, demonstrate suitable personality traits and have a positive attitude to working with children. Many good programmes have shown that modestly educated people can become very effective teachers. This depends on many factors, such as, initial intensive training, regular refresher training and professional interactions, regular in-classroom support and supervision, clearly structured curricula guidelines, and adequate materials. To facilitate effective teaching/learning processes, class sizes are restricted (e.g. thirty students for the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee and for Gono Shahajjo Sangstha, also in Bangladesh), and teachers are held accountable for the attendance and progress of children. There are important lessons from this rich experience for government training approaches.

No simple solutions to the whole area of primary teacher education are evident, yet this issue demands priority attention to avoid wasted investment in any strategy that relies on existing training structures and institutions.

School systems and UNICEF still rely heavily on training of trainers to initiate a cascade of subsequent training as a strategy for in-service training. However, there is ample international experience to indicate that this is a flawed strategy and rarely results in the adequate training of others at each level 'down the cascade'. Without mandatory preparation, active participation, some form of examination, attention to issues linked to accreditation and, most importantly, on-the-job follow-up and professional support, training-of-trainers investments are largely wasted.

Since training continues to be a major investment of time and resources within UNICEF-supported country programmes as an assumed capacity-building strategy,

exploration of better models, evaluations of impact sustainability issues, and attention to accountabilities and follow-up need addressing.

It is useful to consider more attention to self-education rather than imposed or invited workshop training as a worthwhile direction. Self-education implies more long-term and in-depth approaches to capacity building, and offers better prospects of beneficiary ownership of academic and professional opportunities. Accreditation for studies, workshops and other forms of self-education is complex and frequently avoided because of political and industrial sensitivities.

Expanding access to information technologies

Extensive use of computer-assisted and computer-managed instruction is a feature of most international and selective private elementary and secondary schools. Parts of India are seeing the emergence of leading computer technologies, and the evolution of a strong and highly competitive computer industry.

However, many government primary schools throughout South Asia lack buildings, toilets, furniture and even functional blackboards. There are large parts of the region without electric power. Millions of people struggle to find sufficient daily food, water and heating/cooking fuels. Climatic extremes can rapidly ruin sensitive equipment without special protection measures.

In the South Asian context, information technologies may take some time to appear as a regular part of the primary school facilities that cater to poorer children. Yet, for exactly these reasons, affirmative policies towards instructional technologies are essential to avoid further widening the gaps in facilities and programmes for children from poorer communities.

The trend is clear. As computer, radio and television use become more widespread, as the hardware and software become cheaper to purchase, more powerful and easier to operate, and as children become more familiar with mass media and information technologies, South Asia must accelerate its attention to the 'third channel' anticipated at Jomtien (as part of Dimension Six of the Expanded Vision). Addressing the 'education for what?' issue demands that new ways of teaching and learning are addressed by schools, and stereotypical options for careers give way to fresh thinking about what children today will be doing to earn a living in the twenty-first century.

There is great, untapped potential in South Asia to adapt the way in which schools function to serve children. The potential of information technologies and equity of access to the best in technologies and their use must be addressed in new thinking about rights to quality basic education.

Re-discovering the interrelated dimensions of the 'expanded vision of basic education'

The Jomtien Expanded Vision and the Plan of Action for basic education were endorsed in 1990 by all South Asian nations, and translated into national plans of

action and new initiatives—especially for universal primary education. Through facilities, incentives and legislative provisions, governments have encouraged first-generation schoolchildren to enrol and remain in primary schools. That focus addressed Dimension Two of the Expanded Vision—primary schooling.

The major emphasis from 1990 to 1996, as reflected in UNICEF country support programmes, was on access-related goals: getting children into primary schools and keeping them there. Too often there was less attention to culturally consonant, life-relevant teaching/learning approaches to encourage inclusive education and primary school children's active participation in the process of learning and even less attention to those factors that had ill-prepared so many children for traditional schools. For many, school was a bewildering place that was often not very child-friendly. Children's readiness for school—and schools' readiness for first-generation school-going children—remain too frequently ignored.

The 1995 UNICEF Education Strategy described early childhood care (ECC), adult learning, non-formal education, home schooling, open schooling, interactive radio, etc. as supportive (rather than complementary) strategies. Organizationally, UNICEF's emerging focus on early childhood and adolescence as *complementary* to educational efforts in middle childhood reflects the shift in thinking necessitated by a focus on the CRC as relevant to children aged 0–18.

The 'four pillars' of the 1996 Delors Report (learning to know; learning to do; learning to be; learning to live together) and perhaps learning to transform oneself and one's society (UNICEF, 1999) suggest more attention to the linked imperatives of 'quality' and 'relevance' of education at all ages.

Going beyond ECC as a 'supportive' strategy

The 1995 UNICEF Education Strategy described education for adolescents and early childhood education as supportive strategies for primary schooling. Clearly, this focus reflects the primacy given to primary schooling at that time, although many in UNICEF argued that ECC and education for adolescents needed to be considered complementary strategies.

From numerous studies in every child-related discipline and through regional experience, it is increasingly apparent that infancy and early childhood demand integrated, intersectoral, transdisciplinary programming. UNICEF professional officers know that the first few years of life are vital to every child's survival, growth, development and participation rights. Nevertheless, country programmes do not necessarily reflect this primacy in their situation analyses, resource allocations, staffing and investments in integrated ECC programmes in the homes and communities of South Asia.

Greater appreciation of the 'ideal learning opportunity windows' in infancy and early childhood is emerging. This appreciation suggests more attention to the first three years of life, when malleability is greatest. Addressing this situation is imperative for UNICEF and for governments in South Asia that have been inclined to relegate responsibility for early childhood programmes to the private sector.

Mushrooming of profit-oriented pre-schools will not contribute to efforts to make quality care available to all children, irrespective of location or parental resources.

If left to the private sector, the children who could most benefit from the socialization and stimulation of community care facilities are least likely to have that experience. Concerns about children's readiness for school will continue. Furthermore, for many children who are attending private pre-schools in countries that do not have standards and accreditation requirements, the children's experience is anything but joyful. Often they spend years in unsatisfactory learning environments that are downward extensions of traditional rote-learning schools. That is not what UNICEF advocates in suggesting the right of every child to quality home- and community-based programmes that combine best practices in integrated care.

Considerable experience in nutrition and health programming encouraged UNICEF to ensure that the psycho-social and early stimulation components of ECC are also integrated. Efforts to work sectorally (e.g. through nutrition or health projects) have been less effective than intended. A combined and carefully integrated response to children's rights to survive, grow and develop must converge at the family and community level, even if the government ministries responsible for family and children's services remain sectoral and minimally co-ordinated.

New computerized techniques and improved technology within disciplines such as paediatrics, nutrition and developmental neurobiology challenge early childhood professionals to devote maximum attention to the period from 9 months to 3 years, when survival, growth and developmental outcomes are most critical, and neurological development is most malleable.

Verifiable, permanent and irreversible consequences of neglect during this vital period before birth and during the first three years of life encouraged UNICEF to choose ECC for the survival, growth, development and protection of children as its global priority beyond 2000. This priority will be reflected in country programmes, through staffing, resource allocations, strategies and co-operation programmes.

'Moving the goal posts' of compulsory education beyond primary schooling

Reflecting the 1995 UNICEF Education Strategy, the focus in South Asia for much of the decade has been predominantly on primary education (especially the first three 'survival' grades), working mainly in the government sector. This thrust combined special targeting of resources for disparity reduction in access and quality for girls, and for children denied schooling. Most country programmes gave less attention to adolescence and early childhood.

By contrast, the 1999 UNICEF Education Strategy addressed the inter-relatedness of education at all levels:

- within the home for 0–2 year-olds;
- community-based inter-disciplinary ECC programmes preparing children for school and for life;

- 'child-friendly' schools that are effective, efficient and relevant to children's lives, at both the primary and secondary levels;
- special attention to life-skills, participation and quality of teaching/learning processes for all adolescents and not just those who remain in formal schools; and
- lifelong education opportunities.

The impressive benefits of education for girls are well illustrated in UNESCO's *World education report* (1995, p. 27). A series of graphs illustrates the relationships among 'number of years of girls' education' and 'age of first marriage', 'number of children' and 'desired family size'. The impact of education for girls is most noticeable for those who have continued beyond the primary cycle. They marry later, plan to have fewer children and have fewer children.

Furthermore, children's rights, as articulated in the CRC, are now firmly on the agenda of governments and intergovernmental bodies such as SAARC. The intolerable situation of millions of working children in South Asia deprived of childhood and schooling rights is under increasing scrutiny.

While legislative sanctions against child labour and child marriage exist in South Asian countries, enforcement is weak, reflecting the underlying values of patriarchy, exploitation and corruption that perpetuate these practices. Added to this have been ambiguities about the best interests of children who have completed the primary cycle, yet are below the legal age for paid employment or marriage. Until such anomalies and the underlying causes are addressed, child labour and child marriage will continue.

Convincing evidence exists that national development is directly linked to a comprehensively educated workforce, and that life-relevant and employment-relevant education beyond the primary cycle is a necessary and effective investment of national resources.

South Asian countries facing population pressures are realizing the value of investing in girls' education. Most have enacted legislation to 'shift the goalposts' to a seven- or eight-year mandatory basic education cycle, so that there is consistency between compulsory schooling and minimum age for employment. Health and lifestyle issues, and preparation for meaningful employment, are also receiving greater attention as a reflection of concerns about 'education for what'?

Development efforts demand urgent attention and resource allocations to more effective strategies, curricula and environments for adolescents continuing in some form of basic education, in contexts of poverty that traditionally require adolescents to be working or married.

A further illustration, from Population Action International (1998), of the relationship between secondary enrolment rates of girls and teenage births may benefit from more searching analyses of the variations in the overall global trend (Figure 1).

Partnerships

Implementing the Target Dimensions of the Expanded Vision has involved new partners to explore innovative approaches. There are examples in every country of South Asia. Strategies have been developed and refined to address several challenges:

- attracting and retaining out-of-school and working children (e.g. NGO-managed programmes in the larger countries, community schools, multi-grade teaching);
- reducing adult illiteracy (e.g. mass literacy campaigns);
- encouraging young people, especially girls, to continue beyond primary schooling (e.g. secondary education stipend/bursary schemes);
- using mass media (e.g. interactive radio, open schooling);
- expanding access to ECC and education programmes (e.g. Integrated Child Development Services in India); and
- examining learning achievements (e.g. assessment of basic competencies, ABC studies).

More creative solutions, national commitment and necessary resources are needed to ensure that innovative programmes become mainstreamed, within sustainable government–civil society partnerships. Pursuing the Expanded Vision and reporting on all Target Dimensions, not just primary schooling, will require ongoing support and encouragement by the EFA partners.

Intensive district focus, decentralization policy and resource allocations

Larger countries have opted for innovative, 'cutting edge' strategies that have a major component of community mobilization and ownership of basic education facilities, programmes, information and governance. This trend is consistent with policy decisions to give increased authority, responsibility and resources to decentralized administrative units (e.g. the district or sub-district unit such as a village development committee).

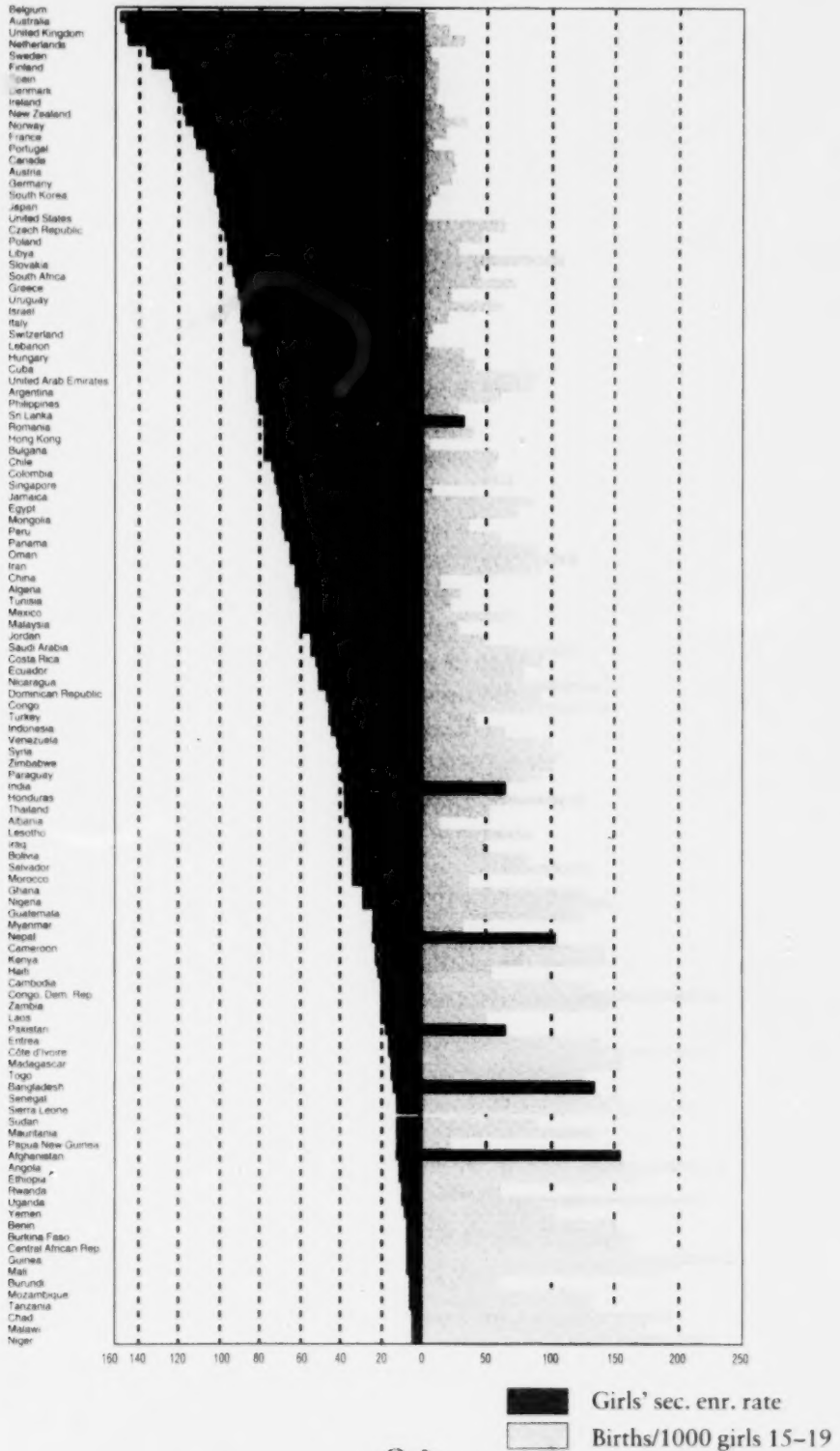
With improved collection, collation, reporting, analysis and presentation of data there will be increased attention within rights programming to encouraging resources to be directed to those children, families and schools most in need of additional support.

When the new presentation tools within 'Child Info' were used to demonstrate the value of sub-national mapping for raising questions and focusing resources (see Figure 1), officials of the Nepalese Ministry of Education became even more committed to the EFA 2000 Assessment as an opportunity to consider the situation of schooling in their country.

Mirroring this decentralization trend, UNICEF is struggling with resource and time management challenges related to this significant departure from traditional 'top-down' strategies. Country programme expenditure rates are variable, impact and quality processes are generally poorly assessed, and forming new partnerships and alliances takes time and effort. Working modalities for community, decentralized government, United Nations and donor partnerships are evolving, but the value added has not been convincingly demonstrated, and the time devoted to inter-agency meetings has increased substantially.

Some trials with 'extenders' are encouraging and reasonably cost-effective but raise questions of sustainability and ownership. With declining regular resources,

FIGURE 1. Girl's secondary education and teenage birth rate (Population Action International, 1998).



more pro-active roles of UNICEF field offices in fine-tuning and monitoring implementation must be matched by devolved financial or staffing resources, more autonomy of action, and accountability for process and impact.

Conclusion

Having adopted rights-based programming, UNICEF co-operation programmes within education are undergoing substantial change. Achieving a goal (such as a 95% enrolment of boys and girls of primary-school age in a primary school) can no longer be considered sufficient when there are children whose right to basic education has yet to be realized. In turn, this has stimulated considerable attention to excluded children and to the strategies required to ensure that they have access to good-quality basic education. As new presentation tools become more widely used, disparities within countries have become more visible, and efforts have been directed to more effective strategies to enrol, retain, educate and graduate all children.

Linked to the sub-national, national, regional and global work associated with the Education for All 2000 Assessment, there is a renewed commitment to the care of infants and young children, and necessary services and support to those who care for them. Educational programmes extending to much younger children reflect the realization that survival, growth, development and protection depend very much on what happens early in life. ECC for survival, growth, development and protection of infants and young children has emerged as a global priority focus within UNICEF, consistent with its mandate within the United Nations system and the evidence suggesting that the greatest neurological malleability exists in the first few years of life.

As countries shift their expectations and standards beyond primary schooling, UNICEF has been evolving its programmatic support for adolescents, and within education, to addressing life-skills and livelihood skills as necessary features of any relevant learning environment.

From these expanded perspectives of basic education, UNICEF must gain more experience in its work with partners, make more efficient use of the new information technologies, address the challenges of integrated programming, and ensure that its support is both effective and efficient within the framework of rights programming.

Note

1. This article is based on a paper presented to the Asia Meeting on Basic Education at the World Bank, Washington, DC, 8 March 1999.

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EDUCATION FOR GENDER EQUITY: THE LOK JUMBISH EXPERIENCE

Anil Bordia

Background

EDUCATION AS EMPOWERMENT

People assume that education in developing countries will reduce inequalities by enhancing the knowledge and skill levels of the disadvantaged. In reality, education perpetuates and widens inequalities. The privileged and the rich have access to a range of educational facilities that equip them to strengthen their hold over resources. Conversely, the poor and marginalized have access to a kind of education that demotivates them, creates hurdles for its completion, and even if they do continue their education, it rarely qualifies them to make a real change in their social and economic status.

The situation of gender disparity is as grave and even more complex. Education often widens gender disparities. The statistics and research findings provided by Western scholars note that there is a causal relationship between women's basic education and development parameters: the higher the level of education, the greater the impact on fertility, child survival, etc. Of course, it is true that women who participate in literacy or primary education programmes undergo socialization, get an opportunity to reflect and have enhanced capacity to make decisions. However, changes in behavioural patterns are influenced by numerous other factors as well—spouse's education, the media, economic status, access to health-care facilities, etc.

If the purpose of education and learning is to enable a person to be self-reliant and empowered, the basic education for girls provided in many of the developing

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world's government-funded schools and literacy programmes contributes little to it. The level of learning, say in language and mathematics, is much lower than what is expected; gender seclusion is not only tolerated, it is actually built into the system; no knowledge or skills are imparted to cope with the stress and challenges of adolescence; creativity is repressed. There is an obvious need to break away from this kind of educational delivery and to fully accept that education of women and girls can be meaningful only if it is empowering. An education which does not help to alter the present situation of women's subordination, a situation in which the woman is a non-person, should be treated as unacceptable.

INDIAN NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION, 1986–1992

Although the constitution of India (1950) requires that the State shall provide equal opportunities to all citizens irrespective of class, caste, religion, race and sex, policy documents on education call only for better educational opportunity for girls. The six Five Year Plans preceding the 1986 National Policy on Education (NPE) and several committees/commissions expressed concern about the wide gap between the education of boys and girls, and called for greater access for girls through more schools, non-formal education (NFE) programmes and monetary incentives.

The NPE was formulated at a time when activist entreaties for women's equality were being heard in all parts of the country. It was argued that more facilities on the existing pattern would have only a marginal impact on educational access, and would not contribute to improvement of women's status. The NPE was prepared after wide-ranging consultations, and the document was adopted by both Houses of the Indian Parliament in May 1986. The section bearing the heading 'Education for Women's Equality' has been hailed as an unqualified call to redirect education to the basic issue of social development. The NPE states:

> Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favour of women. The National Education System will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, the training and orientation of teachers, decision-makers and administrators, and the active involvement of educational institutions. This will be an act of faith and social engineering (Government of India, Ministry of Education, 1986*a*).

As a result of a change in political leadership, a need was felt in 1992 to review the NPE. A committee of distinguished educationists and authorities was set up. Few changes were made in the NPE; the section on education of women remained unchanged. In the revised Programme of Action, the chapter on 'Education for Women's Equality' was moved from fourth place to the first place, with the following being underscored:

> Education for Women's Equality is too important to be left to the individual proclivities of persons in charge of implementing programmes. It should be incumbent on all actors, agen-

cies, and institutions in the field of education at all levels to be gender sensitive and ensure that women have their rightful share in all educational programmes and activities (Government of India, Ministry of Education, 1986*b*.

Unfortunately, the exhortation to reorient all educational programmes to serve the goal of women's equality had a very limited impact. The most significant immediate outcome was Mahila Samakhya [Women Speaking as Equals], a scheme developed by the central Government. This programme concentrated on creating women's collectives on the assumption that once women come together for sharing of experiences and reflection, they will inevitably ask for appropriate education for girls and adult women. Although this happened in the five states where the programme was implemented for over ten years, the programme remained limited in size and the lessons learnt were not utilized on a large scale.

The NPE presented the framework for a national education system and gave an unqualified priority to the universalization of primary education. Adoption of the policy by the Parliament was followed by a flurry of activity—the National Literacy Mission and Mahila Samakhya were launched, and attention was given to preparation of universal primary education (UPE) projects for the two educationally backward states of Bihar and Rajasthan.

Lok Jumbish

SALIENT FEATURES

Lok Jumbish is a project for UPE in the state of Rajasthan, approved in May 1992. *Lok* is a Hindi/Sanskrit word meaning 'people'; *Jumbish* is an Urdu/Persian word meaning 'movement'. Together they convey the idea of people's movement, as well as movement for the people. The goal of Lok Jumbish is for all children to complete at least five years of education and to improve quality. There is also emphasis on equity considerations: equity between boys and girls, between socially and educationally disadvantaged sections and the rest of society, and between children with disabilities and others. One of the objectives is to initiate measures for mobilizing the masses, particularly women, in order that they become aware of their predicament and seek their empowerment, and thereby contribute to UPE and overall human and social development.

People's participation and gender equity were mentioned from the outset as goals as well as strategies. The other important strategies were:

- decentralization;
- improvement of teachers' status;
- insistence on quality in all programmes and activities;
- in-built review and evaluation;
- management in mission mode; and
- fostering of innovations.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASES I AND II (1992–98)

Lok Jumbish has been implemented in phases: Phase I (1992–95) was a pilot phase when strategies were tried out and their feasibility was established. In Phase II (1995–98) coverage of the project extended to a population of about 12 million. Implementation of the project took place in blocks, each block with an average population of 150,000. The block was divided into clusters of twenty-five to thirty-five villages. NGOs were invited to implement the project at the cluster level.

Typically, work in a village began with environment building, using the techniques of personal contact, traditional and folk forms of communication and mass media. The principal messages conveyed related to women's status, why it is important to question the present gender relationship and why basic education is a necessity in modern times. This was followed by formation of a core team in each village, half the membership of which consisted of women. A separate women's group was also constituted. These groups were provided with intensive training in school mapping and micro-planning. Along with local teachers and Lok Jumbish field workers, the groups undertook house-to-house surveys to identify out-of-school children and the reasons for their non-attendance. In view of the fact that girls often remained uncounted, the survey paid special attention to identification of out-of-school girls. A good deal of discussion took place regarding the reasons why parents do not consider it necessary to educate girls. In the course of the dialogues, the role and responsibilities of women were reviewed and the community was enabled to reflect on the implications of the present passive and subordinate status of women. The process of micro-planning involved family and child planning to ensure not only enrolment of all children but also regularity of attendance and their retention.

Simultaneously, a survey of the school was undertaken, together with an assessment of the need for additional facilities. A tacit two-way contract was established: Lok Jumbish management undertaking to provide money for school-building repair and additional facilities, and the village community committing itself to put the necessary pressure on all families to ensure enrolment and retention of all children. The local community also gave an assurance of continuing interest in UPE, and of raising voluntary contributions for the upkeep of buildings and meeting some expenses. Decision-making power on issues such as a new school, a NFE centre or additional teachers (justified under norms laid down by Lok Jumbish) was delegated to a local committee that also oversees progress towards UPE.

The Lok Jumbish project also had a comprehensive programme for improvement of educational quality. This included the following:

- improvement of infrastructure;
- provision of teaching/learning material, including a school library;
- reform of the curriculum to make it competency-based;
- preparation of textbooks based on the new curriculum;
- annual ten-day teacher training and monthly two-day meetings;
- improvement in learner evaluation techniques; and
- improvement in school supervision.

Tremendous progress was recorded during Phase II. Enrolment of girls improved at the rate of 10–11% per annum and boys at the rate of about 5%. Retention and class-to-class transition were also marked by impressive gains. Systematic benchmark and two-yearly post-tests were undertaken to measure improvement in language and mathematics. The annual rate of improvement has been about 7–8% in both subjects.

APPROACH TO GENDER EQUITY

Lok Jumbish aims at providing equal education to boys and girls, and views education as an instrument for women's equality. Several principles have determined the Lok Jumbish approach. These are summarized in the following points:

- It is necessary to understand the roots of inequality in education between boys and girls. If girls are not receiving education, it is mainly because of the way families and the community perceive their role.
- We cannot move towards equal education unless the issue of gender equity, women's dignity and status is raised in all forums. New forums have to be created and women's groups formed to critically understand the challenges facing women.
- If the work is principally focused on women, there must be a preponderance of women workers at the cluster level. And it is not enough just to appoint women, they also have to have the necessary confidence and capacity to function effectively in a male-dominated society.
- If it is not possible to find women workers in some remote and educationally backward areas, the project must set up special institutions for education and training of women to serve as field workers.
- Education as an instrument of women's equality demands that curriculum and textbooks should promote this value. But that by itself may not suffice, because if women teachers work in an environment of isolation and unease, and girls study in circumstances of even greater passivity than boys, there is little hope that the improved curriculum will have much chance of bringing about change. Measures have to be taken to overhaul the entire teaching-learning process.
- Lok Jumbish is guided by the conviction that all wage labour for children up to 14 years of age must be abolished by law and the law rigorously implemented. However, in the present circumstances in India, a large number of children, particularly girls, continue to work at home. Organization of good-quality NFE programmes is a prerequisite for UPE. If these programmes are of good quality, they will serve as an instrument for girls' empowerment.
- Decentralized decision-making that makes effective use of micro-planning will result in innovative improvizations to meet the special learning needs of the most disadvantaged children, particularly girls, residing in remote rural areas. Support for innovation should be built into the system.

IMPROVING THE PARTICIPATION RATE

School mapping, which is undertaken as the first activity when Lok Jumbish begins its work in a village, makes it possible to establish a participation benchmark. One of Lok Jumbish's alarming findings in the approximately 4,000 villages where school mapping has been done (out of about 38,000 in the state of Rajasthan) is that the participation rate of girls in primary education was about 30–35%, as opposed to 60–65% as claimed in government statistics. This alarming reality called for an innovative method to establish the correct benchmark. Faced with this challenge, school mapping was developed into a dual-purpose strategy—not only could correct information be ascertained, but also it could become an instrument of people's mobilization. It was decided that in addition to a village Core Team (set up to undertake household surveys), a women's group would be set up to work with women. The purpose was to engage the entire village community in an analysis of the real status of girls' participation in primary education, as well as participation of women in all developmental activities. Several months of sustained effort results in the emergence of some articulate women who, in turn, work with their peers to raise issues of gender discrimination and the exclusion of girls and women from developmental opportunities. Along with steps taken to improve and expand facilities and gender-sensitization of the school system, formation and activation of village-level groups becomes the launch point for improvement in girls' participation.

The experience of Mahila Samakhya was similar. Referring to village-level women's collectives, Laxmi Krishnamurty and Sharada Jain observed:

> The assumption was that gender stereotypes should first be questioned seriously by women and accepted by the community. This alone would counter the reason for women's non-access to the world of education. Facilitating access through questioning was the first step (Jain & Krishnamurthy, 1996).

Along with school mapping, micro-planning enables the local community to move towards UPE. One aspect of micro-planning is for the village community to know the families and the children who are excluded from primary education or are not regular in attendance. These families are pressured by the local community to send their children to school or a NFE centre. The other aspect of micro-planning is that it enables the block- and cluster-level management to know about problematic trends affecting several villages. We present two illustrations here.

Education of minority children

Several blocks in Rajasthan have large Muslim populations. This is particularly true of the blocks in Alwar and Bharatpur districts falling in the Mewat region dominated by Meos. Meos are a Muslim community of agriculturists and cattle breeders.

Kaman Block is one of the blocks of Bharatpur district. According to the 1991 census, approximately 70% of the total population of this block are Meos. The

block is educationally backward, the overall literacy rate being about 29%. The literacy rate among the Meos is as low as 19%, with negligible literacy among women.

School mapping in 1994 revealed that nearly 60% of boys and 90% of girls belonging to the Meo community were not attending school. But a large number of them were going to local mosques for religious instruction. Such instruction did not include any modern Indian language or mathematics, resulting in the exclusion of these children from the educational mainstream.

Interaction by local Lok Jumbish personnel with the Meo families in the villages revealed that no real effort had been made to draw these children to local schools. There was a lack of mutual confidence between the teachers and the village community. The Meos wanted their children to learn Urdu, which was not part of the syllabus. They were also unhappy about educational standards at the schools.

The local Lok Jumbish staff felt that with support from the Imams (priests) of the mosques it would be possible to persuade the parents to send their children to school. The Imams agreed to the new scheme provided that children would continue to receive religious instruction at the mosque for one and a half hours every day. Involving local people and teachers in the school-mapping activity helped to remove mutual isolation between the school and the community.

Starting in July 1995, the new programme was initiated in thirteen schools. In each of these schools, the school building was repaired, necessary equipment provided, and a trained Urdu teacher, known as an Urdu Shiksha Karmi (literally, educational worker), was appointed. In addition to the Urdu Shiksha Karmis, three supervisors were also appointed. Although the medium of instruction in these schools continued to be Hindi, Urdu was introduced from Grade I as an optional subject.

The response to this initiative was very positive. Demand for the scheme started coming from several villages with Meo majorities. It was decided to extend the programme from thirteen to forty-two villages with effect from 1996–97 and eighty-four villages in 1997–98.

As can be seen in Table 1, the impact of the scheme on the enrolment of Meo children has been dramatic.

TABLE 1. Participation rate of children in primary education: forty-two villages of Kaman Block where Urdu education has been implemented for more than three years

Participation of children (%)	Boys		Girls	
	Meo	Others	Meo	Others
At the time of school mapping	42.19	58.47	11.05	37.71
As of September 1998 (i.e. after about three years)	84.41	61.10	56.24	46.00

A remarkable aspect of the scheme is that Urdu as an additional language is being learnt by Muslim as well as non-Muslim communities (Hindus and Sikhs), thus making it an instrument of social cohesion. The main beneficiaries of the scheme are, of course, the girls of Meo families.

Benefiting from the experience of Kaman, a similar programme has been initiated in two other blocks.

Rural adolescent girls

Balika Shikshan Shivirs [adolescent girls' camps] are fully residential camps for rural girls who have missed the opportunity of schooling and are not in a position to benefit from NFE centres. Lok Jumbish was inspired by the work of the M. Venkatarangaiya Foundation (MVF) in the Ranga Reddy district of Andhra Pradesh. MVF has succeeded in emancipating children from bondage and wage labour and is providing education to them through fixed-term camps. Two teams from Lok Jumbish visited MVF during 1996. They observed that the children in such camps learnt faster because they were free from social pressures and other distractive engagements and also because they were relatively older.

From January to May 1997, four residential camps of four and a half months' duration were launched on an experimental basis. In each of these camps, between 125 and 190 9–14-year-old girls took part. Convincing the parents to send their daughters to such camps was a bold step in the context of the socio-cultural milieu of Rajasthan. Retaining the girls in the camp was the other challenge. Work done with women's groups helped.

While at the camp, about 25% of girls achieved an education level of Grade IV, 50% completed up to Grade III and 25% completed Grade II or less. Older girls were found to learn faster. These girls also learnt about health and sanitation. Organization of the camps contributed to building an environment for girls' education in the villages, which has resulted in increased enrolment and retention of girls in the formal schools, as well as in NFE centres.

In view of the success of the first four camps, thirteen camps of six months' duration were organized in 1997. About 1,700 girls benefited from these camps. More than 100 girls from the previous four camps rejoined to complete their studies in Grades IV and V.

Each camp had seven to ten women teachers. The trained local staff provided ongoing support to the teachers. The minimum teacher qualification was specified as senior secondary level, yet most of the teachers had higher qualifications than the specified minimum. Their training consisted of twenty-one days, which included a five- to seven-day stay in the field to expose them to the villages from which the girls were to join the camps. Inspired by the results of the camps, villagers have also been extending support in various ways.

Dr. Manzoor Ahmed of UNICEF (Tokyo) visited these camps and encouraged the UNICEF Association of Japan to provide financial support. An additional five camps were organized with this support. Some of these funds were also utilized for follow-up activities and organization of shorter camps for previous participants.

GENDER-SENSITIZING THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Gender-sensitization of the school system was found to be a difficult task. Teachers, male as well as female, are the bedrock of middle-class values, steeped in attitudes of gender stereotype. Parents expect schools to teach girls 'good manners'—not to mix with boys, to remain subdued in activities and to prepare themselves for traditional marriage. Boys and girls themselves are victims of their upbringing—girls suffer from low self-image and are willing to tolerate lower status, and boys, fully conscious of their maleness, are accustomed to being treated as superior to girls.

Well-planned interventions have been undertaken to introduce gender-sensitization in the school system. Only limited success has been achieved, but the beginnings hold promise of a genuine shift in the coming years. Some of the initiatives are described below:

Curriculum and textbooks

Introduction of a competency-based curriculum and textbooks for Grades I–VII provided the opportunity to undertake a review from the gender perspective as well. An effort was made not only to eliminate gender bias but also to alter the image of females in the family and society, and to lay the foundation for a genuine understanding of inequality/equality. An effort is also being made to ensure that the level of learning, and participation in learning processes, of girls is equitable.

In-service teacher education

Annual in-service teacher-education courses are attended by nearly 60% of all teachers in schools in Lok Jumbish's area of operation. These courses provide an opportunity to raise gender-relevant issues. In addition, teacher-education courses promote gender-sensitization through:

- a reasonable number of women resource persons;
- an insistence that male and female teachers mix together in an environment of dignity and mutual respect;
- special measures to ensure that women teachers actively participate in the learning process; and
- not allowing women teachers to play stereotypical roles, such as cooking, serving food and eating separately.

School environment and supervision

With the help of supervisory personnel, who are expected to follow up on the revised curriculum, the school environment is gradually changing from being gender-stereotyped to gender-sensitive. Sometimes, members of Women Teachers' Forums (described in the next section) function as informal counsellors for girls. Girls are speaking up if they find the school environment not conducive to their self-respect.

Women Teachers' Forums (WTFs)

A WTF was started in 1994 on an experimental basis in Pisangan Block with the intention of enhancing women teachers' participation in residential teacher-education camps and encouraging them to become master trainers. Women teachers found these forums an effective medium for ending isolation and feeling empowered. Slowly and steadily, WTFs have become an important vehicle for building the positive self-image of women teachers. Members of WTFs also help women's groups in villages. Women teachers have realized that gender equity in education is an important issue for them and that their own image in the community can improve through greater professional commitment.

Currently, 3,000 women teachers are active members of WTFs in forty of the fifty-eight blocks in which Lok Jumbish is being implemented, with the result that there have been notable outcomes for the teachers and the school environment:

- Members of WTFs have become more articulate and are able to set out their problems to their supervisory staff with confidence;
- The number of women master trainers and resource persons has increased;
- WTFs have organized five teacher-training camps in which the participation rate of women teachers was almost 100%;
- WTFs have organized training programmes for skill development and empowerment for their members and are producing bulletins and magazines on their own;
- Members of WTFs have organized girls' fairs and camps for mothers on health education;
- In a few areas WTFs have started networking with women workers from other departments for convergence of services in rural areas; and
- Most WTFs are working to ensure gender equity in the classroom by transferring responsibility for organizing various school activities to girl children.

Camps for in-school adolescent girls

The subordination and discrimination suffered by girls in the family and society are also prevalent in schools. Indeed, male as well as female teachers reinforce patriarchy. As a result, the atmosphere of passive learning in schools affects girls more severely than boys. This matter came up for discussion on a number of occasions in state-level panels on curriculum and gender issues. It was suggested that a camp for girls in Grades VI–VIII should be organized.

The objectives of these camps are to help girls overcome their shyness, to develop self-confidence, to inculcate a critical awareness about their situation and to acquire information about the emotional and physical changes that occur during adolescence. An important objective is also to make girls aware of the opportunity to learn actively, which has been denied to them because of their inability to participate in school activities.

The first one-week camp was organized in November 1997. Twenty-eight girls from five upper primary schools participated. A team of four resource persons conducted the camp, two of whom were WTF members.

The camp was an eye-opener. A large number of problems faced by girls at school came up, including:

- non-availability or non-usability of toilets;
- teasing and rude behaviour of boys;
- negative attitude of teachers and their advice to girls to be tolerant of boys' behaviour;
- uninteresting style of teaching, no effort being made by teachers to involve girls;
- non-availability of a person whom girls may be able to trust; and
- lack of interest among parents about the circumstances in which girls study.

Not only were these issues addressed, but the camp became an opportunity for inter-learning, sharing of common experiences, and an opportunity for the girls to envision *nai ladki* (the new girl). Girls also availed themselves of the opportunity to learn cycling, and some even ventured to learn how to ride a motorcycle. Other outcomes of the camp were:

- Everyone felt that more such camps should be organized;
- Camps should also be organized for boys and an effort made to persuade them to treat girl students with sensitivity;
- Toilets should be constructed and properly maintained in all upper primary schools; and
- Some of the camp participants might be trained as resource persons for the organization of other camps.

As a follow-up, a large camp was organized by the scouts organization for boys of the same schools. The girls who had attended the first camp staged plays to explain their viewpoint. They also participated in the discussion meetings. Towards the end of the camp the boys cooked meals for the girls.

These camps soon caught the eye of Lok Jumbish personnel in other areas. Members of WTFs were interested in taking responsibility for organization of girls' camps. During 1998 and 1999, seventeen additional camps were organized for girls and three for boys. So far, 1,020 girls and 225 boys have benefited.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Lok Jumbish's NFE programme began on a very small scale in May/June 1993. In view of the disappointing experience of NFE programmes in other parts of the country, the initial thinking was against taking up NFE. However, demands emanating from school mapping left Lok Jumbish with no alternative but to start a well-planned, part-time, two-year NFE programme.

In the beginning, the central government pattern was used, using the textbook prepared by the National Council of Educational Research and Training. By the middle of 1994 it became clear that unless corrective measures were taken, NFE in Lok Jumbish could suffer from the same problems as were being faced by the gov-

ernment NFE programmes. Wide-ranging consultations concluded that there was no alternative to the introduction of the new competency-based curriculum developed by Lok Jumbish and extending the duration of the course to five years (three years for those 11–12 years old) to enable learners to complete primary education.

It became clear that the main clientele of NFE would be girls and the basic features of the programme would have to take this into account. Consequently, three principles were laid down to govern Lok Jumbish's NFE programme:

- There has to be an equivalence between the formal and the non-formal education systems;
- The gap between formal and non-formal education should be reduced, and both should benefit from the strengths of the other; and
- There should be flexibility in the programme in all its organizational aspects.

Although the NFE programme started on a small scale, demand for it increased rapidly. Lok Jumbish management, conscious of the need for continuous monitoring, asked a well-recognized evaluation agency (Operations Research Group, New Delhi) to evaluate the programme in 1996 and again in 1998. By and large, the conclusions of both evaluations were positive. They found that practically all the NFE centres were operating, the morale of instructors was high, the community owned and asked for the programme, and the level of learning achieved by pupils was as good as in the formal school system. By the end of 1997 there were 2,326 NFE centres providing education to about 15,000 boys and 31,000 girls. A system of close supervision had been established and units for instructor training had been set up in forty out of fifty-eight blocks.

CLARITY REGARDING GENDER IN MANAGEMENT

Gender sensitivity in management is absolutely essential. Circumstances should be created to appoint women in a reasonable proportion. Women should be able to work as equals and should not have to conform to stereotyped expectations. They should, moreover, have appropriate working conditions and facilities for safety and essential comfort.

Women's role in the family and the responsibilities of motherhood should be recognized. Women should be enabled to work at a time and place suitable to them. The fact that, generally speaking, they have to bear a double burden should be acknowledged and facilitated.

Circumstances that result in women's isolation should be altered—at the individual as well as the group level. Lok Jumbish attempts to create women's collectives and networks for their empowerment. Necessary steps should be taken to prevent sexual abuse and mental and other harassment. Exemplary penal measures should be taken if these occur.

Women must have a voice in decision-making. This should not be confined to decisions that affect women staff members and women and girls in educational and related situations, but all decisions—including those concerning policy and finance. Lastly, a gender-sensitive system of educational management has to have the capability to extend gender sensitivity to the entire education system and to monitor it.

Three of the concrete aspects of Lok Jumbish management that significantly helped to create a gender-sensitive environment are highlighted here.

Gender sensitive human resource development

Human resource development begins at the cluster level. When a woman at this level joins, she has had little experience of working closely with men, or interacting on a large scale with the village community. To begin with, separate training programmes are organized with these women to build their self-confidence and to enhance their ability to articulate and capacity to receive training in mixed groups. Cluster-level staff are also encouraged to organize their own get-togethers. Co-ed staff training is organized at the second stage. Similar training and human resource development programmes are organized for all categories of personnel.

Guidelines on sexual abuse and gender sensitivity

In August 1997 the Supreme Court of India delivred a historic judgement on sexual abuse and harassment. Giving some directions regarding what constitutes sexual abuse and harassment, it ordered that all organizations and institutions lay down firm preventative guidelines, and where such things happen, take strong action against wrong-doers. In Lok Jumbish, it was felt that we should go beyond the court's order and lay down guidelines to codify gender sensitivity at all levels of management. A document containing guidelines on this subject was prepared. It has the following sections:

- summary of the directions of the Supreme Court;
- definition of sexual abuse and harassment;
- Lok Jumbish's definition of gender sensitivity;
- what kind of acts comprise lack of gender sensitivity;
- measures to be taken to prevent sexual abuse and to encourage gender sensitivity; and
- penalty to be imposed in the event of misdemeanours.

Appointment of women and training of cadres

There is a clear majority of women workers at the cluster level—about two-thirds. The numbers at the block and state levels are somewhat lower. For practically all categories of posts a special effort is made to select women—vacancies are left unfilled if the required number of women do not apply. Pro-active measures are also taken. For example, not enough women candidates were forthcoming in the tribal and desert areas. In response, the Women's Residential Institute for Training and Education (WRITE) was set up in Jalore in 1995 and another one at Jhalawar in 1997. These institutions provide education to young women up to Grade VIII and also equip them to work for Lok Jumbish in remote areas. This initiative has been immensely successful inasmuch as sufficient numbers of well-trained women workers have become available.

Conclusions and recommendations

Analysis of the problem of girls' basic education has been undertaken in innumerable committees and commissions, in seminars and workshops, and in books and journals. In some ways, the Lok Jumbish experience reiterates what is already known, but to the extent that Lok Jumbish has been successful on a large scale, the conclusions emerging from this experience deserve attention in India and other educationally backward countries of South Asia.

ENUNCIATE CLEAR POLICY

Clear policy statements can light the way for researchers. Pious policy pronouncements are often made without the political leadership genuinely intending to do what it takes to implement the policy. However, a policy statement can be a valuable tool in the hands of people who undertake advocacy and organizations that want to implement the policy.

THE ISSUE IS EMPOWERMENT

Are we willing to commit ourselves to the view that education must be a process of empowerment? Our answer to this question will determine whether all girls and boys will receive basic education or not, and if so, what kind of education it will be. The most important factor that influences girls' participation in primary education is the perception of the people concerned regarding women's role in society. Bringing about an authentic change in perception is a long-term strategy. What can be done in the short term is to raise questions about power structures and the manner in which they subordinate women. Parents, particularly mothers, can change their attitude of indifference and become more supportive of girls' education if they are involved in a process of reflection and collectivity.

PEOPLE NEED OWNERSHIP

Rural communities are, generally speaking, oblivious to the real situation regarding the status of primary education, rural health, etc. Government data and the information provided by local-level functionaries are rarely dependable. Hence, people speak in vague terms: 'schools don't function' or 'most of the children who can go to school are already going'. Village people are not interested in the disaggregation of data, their analysis or an assessment of the real state of educational delivery. The Lok Jumbish experience shows that involving the village community in survey and analysis can be empowering and can also serve as the starting point for initiating improvement.

NFE IS INDISPENSABLE

NFE programmes for a minimum of three hours every day, throughout the year, are a precondition for UPE in India. Because of the belief, often ascribed to Gandhi

and Vinoba Bhave, that work at home is not only unavoidable, but also desirable, some people eloquently support NFE in preference to formal schooling. However, they do not seem to appreciate that practically all children who work at home do so under duress and are placed at a disadvantage in comparison with those who regularly attend schools of reasonably good quality. There is also little doubt that once the standards of education in public schools improve, children receiving education in NFE centres will get left behind. However, neither legal compulsion nor persuasion will prevent a large section of children from working. In addition, at least 10% of children reside in small villages with no access to schooling. The only mode of education available to about 15% of the 6–14 age group is NFE. These children face multiple disadvantages and at least two-thirds of them are girls. This is a compelling ground for organization of good-quality programmes and building empowering processes into NFE programmes.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IS CRITICAL

Most parents feel demotivated about their children's education if the quality is not good. Besides, good-quality education is itself empowering. Two aspects of quality deserve special attention. The first has to do with the creation of a learning system in which all children receive attention and remedial instruction (if needed). The second aspect of quality relates to active learning, versus the existing situation in India marked by passivity, silence and inactivity. Energetic and interactive learning equips children for a pro-active lifestyle, positive thinking, problem solving and capability for lifelong learning.

MICRO-PLANNING AS A COPING MECHANISM

The conventional mode of educational planning, adopted by government agencies as well as external funding agencies, provides for a generality of services. Little effort is made to devise methods that could help to ascertain special needs. This style of educational planning does not take diversity into account. Micro-planning helps to identify groups and geographical areas that need special attention. Close contact with the local community can help in exploring ways to cope with intractable problems. It is also necessary in order to encourage innovative methods to deal with such situations.

GIVE IMPORTANCE TO MANAGEMENT

Gender-sensitive management is an essential condition for reorganizing education to serve the goal of gender equity. The most important role of management is to convey clear messages about its commitment to the empowerment of women and girls. Management, at all levels, should also be a 'caring' organization, one that understands the difficulties women staff members face, particularly those working in the field. Additionally, good training programmes can build self-confidence among workers. They can also imbue men and women with a spirit to treat each another as equals, showing that special consideration towards women which can make their condi-

tions of work safe and untroubled. A good system of in-built evaluation can ensure that critical aspects of a programme are reviewed periodically and the necessary corrective measures introduced. Through careful monitoring it should be possible to see whether the programme is actually moving in the direction of equal education for girls and whether the objective of treating education as an instrument of women's equality is materializing.

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57

FINANCING HIGHER EDUCATION: PATTERNS, TRENDS AND OPTIONS

Mark Bray

The value of the world region as a unit for analysis has been demonstrated in many comparative and other studies (e.g. Halls, 1990; Kazamias & Spillane, 1998; Arnove & Torres, 1999). Although most regions—and Asia is no exception—contain considerable internal diversity, many also have unifying features. Moreover, in the search for conceptual understanding, diversity can be as useful as uniformity because analysis of contrasts assists in the identification of features that might otherwise have been overlooked. Accordingly, this paper, which focuses on the financing of higher education, seeks to identify commonalties, grapple with the diversity, and highlight the lessons that can be learned. While much of the discussion focuses on Asia as a whole and on its components, parts of the discussion highlight similarities and differences between Asia and other parts of the world.

The paper begins with the context, identifying the geographical coverage and the nature of the societies encompassed. It then presents data on the nature of higher education, to indicate first what existing provision needs to be financed and then what gaps may need to be bridged, and thus paid for, in the future. This leads to commentary on the nature of public and private financing of higher education, and to patterns of fee-charging, grants and loans. Also noted are matters of institutional revenue generation and unit costs. The final section summarizes and concludes.

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The context

A necessary starting point is the geographical boundaries of the region. Consensus on these boundaries is difficult to find, since the region may be defined in different ways for different purposes. As pointed out by Su (1999, p. 329), for example, classical definitions of Asia include five major sub-regions, namely Russian Asia, South-West Asia, South Asia, South-East Asia and East Asia. More modern definitions, however, tend to focus on the last three of these sub-regions and to exclude Russian Asia and South-West Asia. For some purposes Australia and the Pacific Islands are included, but for others they are excluded. This particular paper takes as its focus the region bounded by Afghanistan in the west, Mongolia in the north, Taiwan in the east and the Maldives in the south. The countries thus encompassed are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 also provides estimates of populations, per capita gross national product (GNP), real gross domestic product (GDP) adjusted for purchasing power parity (PPP), and the Human Development Index calculated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The table shows a huge range in populations, from just 300,000 in the Maldives to 1,230,400,000 in China. It also shows a wide range in GNP per capita (from US$200 in Nepal to US$31,490 in Japan) and in real GDP per capita (from PPP$943 in Tajikistan to PPP$31,165 in Brunei Darussalam). These factors have a strong bearing on the size and shape of higher education, and also on modes of financing.

Other aspects of diversity among the countries under discussion should also be highlighted. Concerning political systems, for example, some countries have recently shifted from communism to capitalism (e.g. Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia); others have always had capitalist regimes (e.g. Republic of Korea, Pakistan, Philippines); and yet others (e.g. People's Republic of China, Lao People's Democratic Republic [Lao PDR], Viet Nam) retain socialist systems, albeit in most cases with a stronger element of market economy. Political ideology affects the official philosophy and orientation of higher education.

Several commonalties are also significant. For example, in common with other parts of the world, almost all Asian societies face issues concerning the role of the State in education. This includes questions about the size of the public and private sectors, and about cost-sharing in public institutions. Likewise, almost all societies face issues related to supply and demand of high-level manpower and to migration of educated personnel. Also, all societies both benefit from and have to grapple with the advances in technology that, among other effects, may change curricula and modes of delivery in higher education. All societies have to address tensions between well-established institutional structures and the new modes that may become necessary. One particularly striking feature of the last decade has been the advance of capitalist modes of operation in almost all parts of the region. This has been especially obvious in the States that formally abandoned socialism, but has also been evident in most of the States that officially maintained socialist regimes. Moreover,

TABLE 1. Basic statistics for countries in Asia

	Population (millions)	GNP per capita (US$)	Real GDP per capita (PPP$)	Human Development Index
Afghanistan	17.7	...	...	...
Bangladesh	125.6	240	1,382	0.371
Bhutan	0.6	420	1,382	0.347
Brunei Darussalam	0.3	25,160	31,165	0.889
Cambodia	10.9	270	1,110	0.422
China, People's Republic of	1,230.4	620	2,935	0.650
Dem. People's Rep. of Korea	23.0	...	4,058	0.766
India	955.2	340	1,422	0.451
Indonesia	199.9	900	3,971	0.679
Japan	124.5	31,490	21,930	0.940
Kazakhstan	15.8	1,350	...	0.695
Kyrgyzstan	4.7	550	1,927	0.633
Lao People's Democratic Rep.	4.6	350	2,571	0.465
Malaysia	21.7	3,890	9,572	0.834
Maldives	0.3	990	3,540	0.683
Mongolia	2.4	310	3,916	0.669
Myanmar	46.4	...	1,130	0.481
Nepal	21.7	200	1,145	0.351
Pakistan	135.2	460	2,209	0.453
Philippines	73.5	1,050	2,762	0.672
Republic of Korea	46.0	9,700	11,594	0.894
Singapore	3.1	26,730	22,604	0.896
Sri Lanka	18.6	700	3,408	0.716
Tajikistan	5.8	470	943	0.575
Taiwan	21.6	13,310	...	...
Thailand	60.6	2,740	7,742	0.838
Uzbekistan	23.3	1,010	2,376	0.659
Viet Nam	76.7	240	1,236	0.560

... = not available.
Data refer to the most recent year available—in most cases the mid-1990s.
Sources: Asian Development Bank, 1998; United Nations Development Programme, 1998; various national sources.

the advance of capitalist modes of operation has been apparent even in countries which have long operated basically capitalist economies but which have had government-protected education systems. The chief manifestation of the change has been the advance of privatization in such countries as different as Mongolia and India.

The coverage and nature of higher education

Just as the geographical boundaries of the Asia-Pacific region are open to debate, so are the definitional boundaries of higher education. This paper is primarily concerned with universities, though in some parts it takes a broader focus to include polytechnics, teachers' colleges, technical colleges and other institutions.

Table 2 presents information on the scale of higher education in some countries of the region. The table reports figures on the number of students in higher education (defined to include both university and other post-secondary studies) per 100,000 inhabitants. Compared with an enrolment rate, the advantage of the statistic is that it avoids stipulation of a specific age group for higher education. It also avoids reliance on precise data on the numbers of people within age groups.

TABLE 2. Coverage of higher education in selected Asia-Pacific countries, 1995

Country	No. of students per 100,000 inhabitants	Country	No. of students per 100,000 inhabitants
Brunei Darussalam	514	Macau	1,874
Cambodia	119	Mongolia	1,569
China	478	Myanmar	564
India	601	Nepal	501
Indonesia	1,146	Philippines	2,701
Japan	3,139	Singapore	2,522
Kazakhstan	2,807	Sri Lanka	474
Korea, Republic of	4,955	Tajikistan	1,857
Kyrgyzstan	1,115	Thailand	2,096
Lao PDR	134	Uzbekistan	2,960
Malaysia	971	Viet Nam	404

Source: UNESCO, 1998, p. 149.

The chief message from the table is again one of diversity. The reported range is from 119 students per 100,000 people in Cambodia to 4,955 students in the Republic of Korea. Other countries at the bottom of the scale include the Lao PDR, Viet Nam, Sri Lanka and China. Countries at the top of the scale include Japan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. All three socialist States for which data are available (Lao PDR, China and Viet Nam) are at the bottom, but some former socialist States (e.g. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan) are near the top. This was not just a function of capitalist enterprise in the latter States, because they had high enrolment rates even during the Soviet era. Other capitalist States are scattered throughout the spectrum. To some extent the figures reflect the ideologies of government planners, but they also reflect the resources available to the States in question. Prosperous States could more

easily afford large systems of higher education, and, by having stronger secondary school systems, supply larger numbers of potential recruits.

While the statistics on students per 100,000 inhabitants are useful, they do have limitations. One problem is that the age structure of populations may vary considerably—some are weighted towards people under the age of 15, and others are weighted towards people over the age of 40. For that reason, it remains instructive to examine enrolment rates for specifically designated higher-education age groups. Table 3 shows figures for enrolment rates by world region. It indicates that average enrolment rates among the less-developed countries of East Asia and Oceania and of South Asia were greater than those in sub-Saharan Africa, but considerably lower than in the Arab States and in Latin America and the Caribbean. They were also, of course, much lower than among the more developed countries of North America. However, enrolment rates in the more developed countries of Eastern Asia and Oceania were comparable with those of Europe. In all regions, enrolment rates increased between 1985 and 1995. The increase in the more developed countries of East Asia and Oceania was dramatic—from 28.1% to 45.3% in only a decade. This matched a comparable increase in Europe.

TABLE 3. Gross higher education enrolment rates by world region, 1985 and 1995 (%)

	1985	1995		1985	1995
Less-developed regions	6.5	8.8	More-developed regions	39.3	59.6
of which:			of which:		
Sub-Saharan Africa	2.2	3.5	North America	61.2	84.0
Arab States	10.7	12.5	Asia/Oceania	28.1	45.3
Latin America/Caribbean	15.8	17.3	Europe	26.9	47.8
East Asia/Oceania	5.4	8.9			
South Asia	5.3	6.5	Countries in transition	36.5	34.2
Least developed countries	2.5	3.2			

Source: UNESCO, 1998, p. 108.

Institutions of higher education may be either public or private. The World Bank (1994, p. 35) has shown that in the late 1980s and early 1990s Asian countries generally had fairly high proportions of private enrolments in higher education, particularly in comparison with Africa. However, considerable variation again existed within the region. Among the forty countries for which the World Bank presented data, the countries with the highest and lowest proportions were both Asian—the Philippines and Pakistan, respectively.

Since the period to which the World Bank figures referred, in some countries the balance has shifted markedly towards private systems. Pakistan was among them, to the extent that by 1996 ten private universities and institutes operated ongside twenty-five public sector universities, though the average size of the private

institutions was much smaller than in the public sector (Sheikh, 1998; Kizilbash, 1998). In Indonesia, the number of private post-secondary institutions increased from 344 in 1980 to 1,035 in 1993; in Thailand the number of private universities and colleges rose from 11 in 1976 to 31 in 1994 (Woodhall, 1997, p. 2). Especially dramatic were changes in former socialist systems. In Mongolia, for example, within three years of relaxation of restrictions on private higher education in 1990, eighteen private institutions were established to operate in parallel with the fourteen public ones. The private bodies focused on specialist domains such as business, sports, law and languages (Bray et al., 1994, p. 37–38). Comparable patterns were evident in Kazakhstan and some other former Soviet States (Kitaev, 1996).

The scale of private higher education in Philippines deserves particular comment because it is at the extreme. In 1994/95, 794 out of 1,090 institutions (72.8%) were operated by private bodies. Of these, 247 institutions were run by sectarian organizations, particularly the Catholic Church. Some private universities were operated as companies, the shares of which were quoted on the stock exchange. Gonzales (1997, p. 264) described changing official attitudes to the private sector. Prior to 1969, the policy was one of *laissez faire* to the point that 85% of students attended private universities financed almost entirely from fees. This system led to a mismatch between the supply of graduates and the available jobs, and also to complaints about high fees. As a result, for over a decade starting in 1969 the Government regulated private institutions and attempted to make the sector conform to a central plan. However, the regulations threatened the viability of some institutions, and political change led to a reversal of policies in the 1980s. By 1992 deregulation was complete and the *laissez faire* approach had come full circle.

Government and non-government financing in public higher education

The public sector is, of course, not financed exclusively by governments. Individuals also contribute substantially, particularly through fees. Additionally, public institutions may have other sources of revenue. This section of the paper begins with some comments on public revenues and expenditures, before turning to matters of fees, grants and loans, and institutional incomes.

PUBLIC REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

The main way to finance public institutions is through income from taxation. Some countries have well-established systems of taxation, which include income and corporation taxes as well as sales and other indirect taxes. Countries in this group include Japan and Taiwan. Other countries have much weaker systems of taxation, either because of general underdevelopment or because of recent emergence from socialist regimes, which were financed on different principles. Countries in this group include Bhutan, China, Cambodia and Myanmar.

TABLE 4. Public expenditures on education in selected Asian countries, 1995

Country	Education as a % of GNP	Education as a % of total govt. budget	Higher education as a % of total public education expenditures
Bangladesh	2.3	8.7	7.9
China	2.3	...	16.5
India	3.5	12.1	13.6
Japan	3.8	10.8	13.5
Kazakhstan	4.5	17.6	12.5
Korea, Republic of	3.7	17.4	7.9
Kyrgyzstan	6.8	23.1	8.3
Lao PDR	2.4	...	3.9
Malaysia	5.3	15.5	16.8
Maldives	8.4	13.6	...
Mongolia	5.6	...	17.8
Myanmar	1.3	14.4	11.7
Nepal	2.9	13.2	28.1
Philippines	2.2	...	...
Singapore	3.0	23.4	34.8
Sri Lanka	3.1	8.1	12.2
Thailand	4.2	20.1	16.5
Uzbekistan	9.5	24.4	...
Viet Nam	2.7	7.4	9.7

.... = not available.

Source: UNESCO, 1998, p. 158–59.

Information on the size of total government revenues, including taxation, may be discerned by comparing figures on the percentage of education in government budgets with figures on public expenditures on education as a percentage of GNP. Whereas Hong Kong's 2.8% of GNP consumed by public expenditures on education represented 17.0% of the budget, in Viet Nam the only slightly higher 2.9% of GNP represented only 7.4% of the budget (Table 4). Conversely, Kyrgyzstan's 23.1% of the budget represented 6.8% of GNP, while Singapore's 23.4% of the budget represented only 3.0% of GNP. The second column in Table 4 is also instructive in its own right as an indicator of government commitment to the education sector.

The next question concerns the priority for higher education within total education budgets. The right-hand column in Table 4 indicates a wide range—from 37.1% in Hong Kong to just 3.9% in the Lao PDR. However, higher education in

the latter was set for rapid expansion (Weidman, 1997). Most analysts would consider allocations below 10% to be low, but ones above 25% to be rather high.

FEES IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

The 1980s and 1990s brought a worldwide trend towards introduction and increase of fees in public higher education. This was in direct opposition to the view dominant in the 1950s and 1960s that public education, particularly at lower levels but also including higher education, should be free of charge. For example, Article 13 of the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (United Nations, 1973, p. 5) stated that:

> (a) primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all;
> (b) secondary education in its different forms [...] shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education; and
> (c) higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education.

The chief justification was that education was a major route for social mobility, and the possibility of poor people being excluded from education by fees was considered inequitable.

By the 1990s, however, the third clause had been widely abandoned. This was not only because of financial stringency but also because of the realization that fee-free education at the tertiary level, far from being equitable, was likely to be *in*equitable. The reason is that young people from richer socio-economic groups are always more likely than their counterparts from poorer socio-economic groups to attend tertiary institutions, and subsidies for higher education are therefore more likely to benefit the rich than the poor. This observation was coupled with strong advocacy, particularly on the part of the World Bank, that investment in primary education gives better economic rates of return than secondary or tertiary education, and that in most contexts desirable policies should include reduced public investment in tertiary education in favour of increased public investment in primary education (World Bank, 1995, p. 56).

The Asian region has accompanied other parts of the world in the global shift in policy. The World Bank (1994, p. 42) presented data on the proportion of recurrent expenditures in public higher education institutions met from tuition fees in thirty-three countries in the late 1980s or early 1990s. In only twenty of these countries did tuition fees account for over 10% of recurrent expenditures. The scale of fees was not related to the incomes of countries, but there was variation across regions. Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe had little or no tradition of cost recovery in public higher education. However, public-institution fees exceeded 10% of recurrent expenditures in one out of five Latin American countries and in half of the Asian countries in the sample.

TABLE 5. Sources of recurrent income of selected Indian universities, 1989/90–1991/92 (%)

Institution	Govt. grants	Fees	Press	Farm	Loans	Endow-ments	Misc.
Central universities							
Aligarh Muslim	97.4	1.1	0.0	1.0	0.2	0.0	0.3
Banaras Hindu	89.4	0.8	0.6	7.2	0.0	0.4	1.6
Hyderabad	94.7	1.9	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	2.6
Jawaharlal Nehru	92.7	1.0	1.0	2.0	0.7	0.0	2.5
Pondicherry	86.7	8.3	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	4.1
Viswa Bharati	97.9	0.5	0.2	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.7
AVERAGE	93.2	1.2	0.4	3.7	0.1	0.1	1.3
State universities							
Bombay	11.5	39.0	28.3	2.2	4.1	0.0	15.1
Calcutta	91.2	7.5	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.8
Karnataka	53.5	5.5	1.8	0.1	12.7	15.1	11.3
Kerala	58.3	30.1	4.5	1.2	1.9	0.0	4.0
Madras	15.7	46.8	1.0	0.2	4.5	0.4	31.4
Mohanlal Sukhadia	91.3	8.1	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.2
Utkal	59.2	22.1	0.0	0.5	2.2	0.7	15.3
AVERAGE	54.3	21.2	5.3	0.6	4.3	5.3	9.0

Source: Tilak, 1997, p. 11.

For analysis of some countries, however, disaggregation of national averages is necessary. Table 5 shows fee incomes in selected universities in India. Fee incomes in the sample of central universities averaged below 2% of total income, but in state universities they averaged 21.2%. Among the state universities shown, the range was from 8.1% to as much as 46.7%.

As the 1990s progressed, in some parts of Asia fees increased further. In Hong Kong, for example, where the Government imposed uniform fees across all public institutions, the authorities decided in 1991 to raise fees from 12% of recurrent costs (which was already a substantial increase from the situation in the mid-1980s) to 18% in 1997 (Bray, 1993, p. 38). Moreover, as soon as the 18% target had nearly been achieved, the authorities considered raising the proportion to 20% or more (University Grants Committee of Hong Kong, 1996, p. 161, 174). The Government did not immediately implement this idea, but the fact that the notion was even considered was significant. Fees have also greatly increased in the People's Republic of China. Many institutions admitted self-sponsored students for high fees, and by 1997 the average fee in many institutions was between 25 and 30% of recurrent

costs (Zhang, 1998, p. 246). In Singapore, differential fees were charged by academic discipline. In arts and social sciences, fees were increased from 10% of the recurrent cost in 1986/87 to 20% in 1992/93, and the Government declared its intent to raise fees further to 25% (Selvaratnam, 1994, p. 81–83).

GRANTS AND LOANS

People who oppose such increases in fees usually do so particularly on the grounds that fees are likely to exclude individuals from the poorest segments of society. Part of the response by policy-makers has been to provide an array of support schemes, including grants and loans. Grants may be linked not only to the incomes of applicants but also to academic performance and to efforts to attract students to particular types of training. Loan schemes usually contain a substantial proportion of hidden grants.

Among the international authorities on student loans are Woodhall (1987; 1991; 1997) and Ziderman and Albrecht (1995). These authors have highlighted a wide range of models, of which the two main types are mortgage loans and income-contingent loans. Mortgage loans are more common, and require students to repay sums over a specified period, usually with fixed monthly payments. Income-contingent loans provide faster avenues for repayment by high-income graduates, and safety nets for low-income graduates, by linking the size of repayment to graduates' incomes. Most loan schemes provide for living expenses as well as for tuition fees. Some loan schemes are administered by government agencies, while others are operated by commercial banks.

The hidden grant elements of loans take the form of subsidized interest rates, leniency for low-income students, and tolerance of default on repayment. Ziderman and Albrecht (1995, p. 70–71) compiled statistics of hidden subsidies and government losses in twenty countries. The hidden grant through subsidized interest rates ranged from 13% of the loans in Barbados to 93% in Venezuela; average loan recovery ratios ranged from just 2% in Brazil to 67% in Barbados. Asian countries were not well represented in Ziderman and Albrecht's sample, but data from Indonesia, Japan and Hong Kong contributed to the general conclusion that loan schemes may demand substantial administration, and that such schemes are much less efficient as a mechanism for recovery of costs than is widely assumed.

In the light of such statistics, much attention during the 1990s focused on ways to improve the efficiency of cost-recovery schemes. In Hong Kong, the Government was recommended in 1996 to simplify administration and raise interest charges. When the scheme was initiated in 1969, loans were interest-free. However, in 1987 a 2.5% charge was placed on loans, and a 1996 report recommended that this should be raised to between 5.8 and 8.5% (Ernst & Young, 1996, p. 122). Similarly, continued scrutiny of schemes in China is permitting the authorities to plug some of the leaks in the system set up in the early 1990s (World Bank, 1997; Zhang, 1997).

INSTITUTIONAL REVENUE-EARNING SCHEMES

Higher education institutions in Asia are increasingly being required to secure additional funds from other sources. Table 5 showed, somewhat unusually, an institution in India that reportedly raised 28.3% of its recurrent income from a press. It also referred to farms and to endowments. Several institutions in the region now solicit donations from alumni. Many are also encouraging teaching staff and others to undertake consultancy services; some are moving into direct business ventures (Harman & Selim, 1991).

The scale of revenue obtainable from such sources depends greatly on the general wealth of the societies in which the institutions operate, on the nature of specializations offered by the institutions, and on the frameworks set by governments. Prosperous societies are obviously better able to support such initiatives than impoverished ones, though the irony is that institutions in prosperous societies have in general faced less need to secure independent revenues because their governments have been more easily able to provide substantial budget allocations. In the marketing of skills, institutions and individuals specializing in applied science and commerce generally have more opportunities than their counterparts specializing in history or philosophy. Governments can facilitate moves by offering tax exemptions for donations to public institutions.

Viet Nam is among the countries in which higher education institutions have been forced by the escalating cost of living and the inadequacy of revenues from the Government to earn independent revenues. Pham and Sloper (1995, p. 174) indicate that in 1991, Viet Nam's College of Construction was able to add 28.3% to its budget by taking on external contracts. Comparable figures were 22.0% for the Foreign Languages University, 11.0% for the College of Mining and Geology, 10.5% for the Teachers Training College of Vinh, and 4.2% for the Technical Teachers College No. 1. Pham and Sloper comment that the scale of such income generation chiefly depends on:

- the product or service that can be provided (which does not always relate to the primary mission of the institution);
- the entrepreneurial capability and culture within the institution; and
- the state of institutional infrastructure—personnel, organizational and technical—which creates the basis for delivering a desired product or service.

Institutions in urban locations generally have greater opportunities than ones in rural locations. However, in Viet Nam rural institutions have been able to generate revenues by raising poultry, producing vegetables, managing restaurants and tailoring clothes. Critics observe that such activities deflect the staff from their primary mission as specialized providers of higher education. Advocates usually agree, but point out that the activities at least permit the institutions to survive in harsh economic climates.

An example of a very different sort may be taken from Singapore. Although the country has a buoyant economy and a government with continued budget surpluses, even in Singapore the 1990s brought a philosophy that higher education institu-

tions should develop their own sources of revenue and reduce dependence on the government. In 1991, appeals were launched by Singapore's two universities for newly created Endowment Funds with a target of S$1 billion (Selvaratnam, 1994, p. 81). To boost the funds, the Government contributed S$500 million, and committed itself to match up to S$250 million during the following five years if the universities could secure that amount from non-government sources.

Unit costs in higher education

Official policies that fees should cover a given percentage of unit costs raise questions about the size and the determinants of those unit costs. In some systems, fees are determined in proportion to average unit costs for all disciplines. Hong Kong is in this category, with the result that in reality the fees of humanities students cover about 30% of recurrent costs, whereas those of medical students cover only about 6% (University Grants Committee of Hong Kong, 1996, p. 134). In other systems, differential fees are charged not only by discipline but also by year of study and by institution. This has been a practice in Mongolia, for example, though it has been considered an over-complex system (Bray et al., 1994).

In both types of arrangements, controversies may surround the components of unit costs (Tan & Mingat, 1992, p. 28–37). Asian universities are increasingly noted for their research output, which of course has to be paid for. Some students consider it reasonable to pay a proportion of direct instructional costs, but less reasonable to pay for research output. This issue has caused controversy in some systems, and is likely to be an increasingly prominent element of policy debate.

Unit costs are also partly determined by salaries, in which again the region has considerable diversity. Academics in Hong Kong are among the best paid in the world—a fact that is recognized by the academics themselves (Boyer, Altbach & Whitelaw, 1994, p. 50). In contrast, their counterparts in Viet Nam are among the worst paid. When in 1985 the minimum state salary level in Viet Nam was 220 dong per month, a higher education lecturer was paid 425 dong, equivalent to 87 kilograms of rice, plus subsidies of various sorts (Pham & Sloper, 1995, p. 169). Subsequent adjustments for inflation were inadequate, and by 1991 a lecturer's salary was equivalent to only thirty-six kilograms of rice plus subsidized housing and electricity. By 1993 the salary had again been raised to the equivalent of seventy-five kilograms of rice, but without the fringe benefits. Lecturers could only provide effectively for their families by securing additional sources of income.

Salaries have also been very low in China. As a result, personnel costs in 1994 did not exceed 50% of institutional budgets, and in some cases were only 11%, which in international terms was very low (World Bank, 1997, p. 49). However, between 1980 and 1993, real salaries and benefits of lecturers had increased at an average of 10.7% a year, compared with an 8.9% increase in average annual salaries for all types of employees. In 1994, average annual wages in higher education were 23% above those in secondary education, and 32% above the national average for all sectors. This remained a much smaller differential than in the majority of coun-

tries, although it reflected a policy increasing the wages of intellectuals in order to attract and retain capable individuals in higher education.

To justify and permit raising of salaries, some institutions in China endeavoured to raise student–staff ratios. In 1994, the average ratio of students for each full-time equivalent member of the teaching staff was just 7:1. In most North American and European universities the ratio was 15–20:1, in Taiwan 21:1 and in the Republic of Korea 33:1. From one perspective, Chinese institutions could afford low ratios because wages were low; but from another perspective it was desirable to raise both salaries and ratios—in the process keeping unit costs roughly constant.

A further determinant of unit costs is the size of institutions. Partly for nationalistic reasons, even the smallest States are anxious to have their own universities. Thus Samoa (population 163,000) and Brunei Darussalam (population 281,000) have their own national universities, though the Maldives (population 300,000) does not. Bhutan (population 600,000) has a college affiliated to the University of Delhi that aspires to gain autonomy as an independent institution. One way through which these institutions keep expenses under control is by avoiding high-cost science and other subjects. However, this is not always considered a satisfactory approach to national development.

However, small institutions are not a phenomenon only of small countries. Most countries with Soviet legacies have traditions of small specialist institutions that are not very appropriate to the new economic and social frameworks. In Viet Nam, some institutions were amalgamated during the early 1990s; but in 1994/95, sixty-six of the 100 remaining higher education institutions still had enrolments of below 2,000 students, forty-four had enrolments below 1,000, and eighteen had enrolments below 500 (World Bank, 1996, p. 81). Similar proportions were to be found in China (World Bank, 1997, p. 54). Amalgamation is not to be recommended for all institutions, but it would be a way to reduce unit costs in many cases.

Reduction of unit costs can also be achieved in other ways. Like their counterparts in other regions, many Asian institutions have made increasing use of distance learning as a supplement to, or a replacement of, face-to-face teaching. Since the early 1980s, distance education has expanded rapidly in Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam (Asian Development Bank, 1987; 1990). It is noteworthy that eight of the eighteen autonomous distance education universities listed by Moore (1992) were located in Asia. Three of them were highlighted as being among the largest in the world, namely the Indira Gandhi National Open University founded in India in 1985, the Sukhotai Thammathirat Open University founded in Thailand in 1978, and the Allama Iqbal Open University founded in Pakistan in 1974. In addition, China has a whole system of radio and television universities, numbering forty-six in 1994.

The World Bank (1994, p. 34) presented statistics on unit costs in distance education and conventional methods for four Asian institutions which showed that unit costs in distance education appeared dramatically lower. This type of finding is of considerable importance. Policy-makers need to exercise caution, however, because

more research on this topic is needed (Perraton, 1994). Such research would include examination of the relative qualities of the two modes of delivery, and of the labour market outcomes of graduates from distance-education programmes. Dhand (1996) has highlighted serious deficiencies in the effectiveness of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degrees offered by distance education in India, and it is likely that many of Dhand's remarks would be echoed in other contexts. Nevertheless, it seems certain that distance education will become an increasing feature of higher education in Asia as much as in other parts of the world. It will be facilitated by the expansion of the Internet and e-mail.

Privatization in higher education

Privatization in higher education, as previously noted, has been a growing feature in Asia, and the trend is likely to continue (Wongsothorn & Wang, 1997). Writing from the Indian perspective, for example, Deshpande (1994) sees it as 'inevitable'. The starting points for privatization vary according to the country, but growth of the private sector is evident throughout the region.

Some observers view this trend positively. For example, the World Bank (1994, p. 5) has stated that:

> Private institutions are an important element of some of the strongest higher education systems to be found today. [...] They can respond efficiently and effectively to changing demand, and they increase educational opportunities with little or no educational cost.

However, Yee & Lim (1995, p. 179) have pointed out that the private sector includes many 'opportunists and charlatans' as well as reputable providers. In addition to local entrepreneurs, the opportunists include some ventures that have bases in North America, Europe and Australasia but which market their wares in Asia. The 1990s brought a rash of joint ventures and overseas operations in such countries as Malaysia and Japan, some of which were of questionable quality and which offered degrees that were not accredited in their home countries. *Laissez faire* policies towards the private sector may also exacerbate problems in the labour market. With reference to the Philippines, Gonzales (1997, p. 281) pointed out that permissiveness produced an overproduction of graduates in some fields and underproduction in others. He added that the 'magic hand' of the free market was not present at all times.

These comments imply that some government oversight is needed in this sector. As pointed out by the World Bank (1994, p. 9), for example, national policymakers need to have 'a vision [...] for the sector as a whole and for the role of each type of institution within that whole, including private institutions'. The Bank recognizes that in most countries public institutions will continue to educate the majority of students, but recommends government planners to promote coherence in the sector as a whole by facilitating the flow of information on the costs and quality of different courses, and by establishing procedures for accrediting degrees from private institutions.

One dimension that will deserve continuing monitoring concerns the direct linkages between private and public institutions. In Indonesia, for example, three-quarters of the teachers in private institutions are employed on a part-time basis and simultaneously work full-time in public institutions (Yee & Lim, 1995, p. 191). Viewed positively, this can be described as symbiosis, but viewed negatively it might be considered parasitism.

Conclusions

This paper began by noting that regional analysis can be a useful tool within the domain of comparative analysis. Despite the internal diversity, examination of patterns and trends in the financing of higher education in Asia shows some commonalties across the region. For example, almost all governments are trying to identify the appropriate role of the State and the balance of public and private institutions, and all have competing priorities for resources within the education sector and between education and other sectors. Throughout the region, the 1980s and 1990s brought increased attention to forms of cost-sharing. Fees have generally been increased, in most cases supported by scholarships and loans of various kinds. Also, throughout the region there have been important experiments with distance education.

To a large extent, these features can also be found in other parts of the world (Wasser & Picken, 1998; Johnstone, 1998). However, Asia does have some distinctive emphases. One aspect, as noted above, was in the scale of cost-recovery through student fees. Another aspect, according to the World Bank (1994), is in the mix of institutions. The Bank identifies Asia (p. 30) as 'the continent where differentiation efforts have been the most extensive and most effective'. This remark chiefly referred to the mix of conventional and distance-learning universities, and to the balance of public and private operation. Some systems are also differentiating between the nature and role of specific institutions. Institutions in the United States have long been divided into ones that have a primary focus on teaching as opposed to others that have a strong research function. A similar form of differentiation is being developed in China and India, for example.

The question is then what can be expected during the coming decades. While prediction is always difficult and dangerous, several factors seem to be clear:

- *Expansion*. It seems probable that continued expansion will be a major feature. This will be particularly obvious in the socialist States that currently have low enrolment rates, including China, the Lao PDR and Viet Nam. Many capitalist States will also make renewed thrusts to reach higher enrolment rates. The chief exceptions are likely to be Japan and the Republic of Korea. In many countries expansion will be financed through economic growth, but in some contexts restructuring and improved efficiency will be needed.
- *Research*. The pattern of increased emphasis on research in higher education is likely to be maintained. Countries that used to send students abroad for doctoral studies now have the capacity to train them at home. The emphasis on research is especially evident in countries with strong economies, including Japan, Singapore, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan.

- *The public–private mix*. Countries such as the Republic of Korea and the Philippines already have such high proportions of private higher education that it seems unlikely that the proportion will increase further. However, the private sector is likely to become increasingly evident in such countries as China, India, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam. Moreover, throughout the region the boundaries of the public and private sectors have become blurred as public institutions have charged increasing fees and generated larger proportions of income through entrepreneurial activity.
- *Fees and loans*. No sooner have populations become used to fees exceeding 10% of recurrent costs than authorities begin to talk of raising fees above 20%. It seems probable that present trends of cost-sharing will continue. They will be supported by loan schemes of various kinds, and renewed attention will be given to the efficiency of those schemes.
- *Cost-recovery through taxation*. Countries in the region with efficient taxation systems are likely to investigate in closer detail the possibility of using those systems for stronger cost-recovery. This may be linked to student loans, as in Australia (Creedy, 1995; OECD, 1998).
- *Distance education*. The 1980s and 1990s to some extent brought a revolution through which conventional forms of higher education were supplemented with new forms of distance education. These trends are likely to continue. The potential of the Internet in this domain is only beginning to become evident. At present, the Internet is dominated by the English language, but already it is being used for transmission in other languages, including those that are not based on alphabets, such as Chinese. Even libraries, conventionally conceived of as buildings full of books and journals, are changing. In the process, education is becoming more accessible to many (though not all) disadvantaged groups, and unit costs are likely to fall further.

Within this arena of changing patterns, policy-makers in individual countries will continue to have many options. Some policies can be free-standing, such as encouragement to institutions to generate independent revenues from alumni and consultancies. Other policies will need to be formed as packages, such as combinations of fee increases with expanded access to loans. The continued existence of a multitude of options, together with continuing diversity of social and economic characteristics, means that the overall mosaic in Asia is likely to remain full of variety and diversity. At the same time, both policy-makers and practitioners will continue to derive value from cross-national exchange of experiences and perspectives. They can learn from differences as well as from commonalties; they can learn from bold initiatives as well as from cautious ones.

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SCHOOLS THAT CREATE REAL ROLES OF VALUE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Roger Holdsworth

In Australia there is a quiet debate occurring about civics and citizenship education. It is a debate that is about young people, but that seldom involves young people. Perhaps in the face of widespread cynicism about political processes and participation (Mellor, 1998*a*; 1998*b*) and growing concerns about issues of student alienation as well as about the connectedness of young people (not only to their schools but also to their communities and their society), this debate is set to become more noisy.

In these debates there are naturally substantial differences in assumptions about what it is to be a citizen, about the status of young people and about the role of schooling.

Rather than looking at ideas from the perspective of individual characteristics or deficits (the degree to which young people themselves are alienated or have a sense of connectedness), this paper is concerned with the ways in which institutions, such as schools, act to alienate or connect students.

It is argued here that such whole-school approaches are at the very heart of learning to be an informed and active citizen. Issues of student participation and agency underlie positive educational responses (see Slee, 1995; Pearl & Knight, 1999) and these issues will be explored here.

Original language: English

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Citizenship and education

In a climate of national elections, electoral definitions of democracy and citizenship are brought to the fore. However, debates on citizenship have identified broader concepts and have, in particular, pointed to 'minimal' and 'maximal' interpretations in the way that the concepts of citizenship have been used. Evans has characterized these:

> Minimal interpretations emphasise civil and legal status, rights and responsibilities, arising from membership of a community or society. The good citizen is law-abiding, public-spirited, exercises political involvement through voting for representatives. Citizenship is gained when civil and legal status is granted.
>
> Maximal interpretations, by contrast, entail consciousness of self as a member of a shared democratic culture, emphasise participatory approaches to political involvement and consider ways in which social disadvantage undermines citizenship by denying people full participation in society in any significant sense (Evans, 1995).

When such a discussion is applied to the role of education of young people in our society, attention is also drawn to the reasons for learning about issues of democracy and citizenship. Are these issues that only concern students' future lives? Are we talking of training 'future citizens'? Here too there are substantially different assumptions. Owen notes the distinction between being a citizen and being an adult:

> If citizens are those of us with equal standing and protection within our community, with the right (and obligation) to vote, to stand for political office, to serve as part of a jury and so on, then it becomes difficult to understand why citizenship should be viewed by young people as other than something that will happen 'later'. This view of citizenship necessarily pushes us towards redundant pedagogies that focus on training people for future roles, rather than equipping them with skills and understandings that can and must be given expression immediately. It reduces young people to either non-citizens or, at best, apprentice-citizens. Neither status is likely to provide an appropriate starting point for learning.
>
> If, however, our concept of citizenship goes beyond the legal status and focuses on the array of roles that individuals can play in forming, maintaining and changing their communities, then young people are already valuable, and valued, citizens to the extent that they participate in those roles. This means recognizing that eligibility to vote, serve on a jury, etc. derives not from citizenship as such but from a combination of citizenship and adulthood. We should still engage in debate about just what adulthood is and when it should apply, but this must not stand in the way of a recognition that young people must be understood as citizens (Owen, 1996, p. 21).

For schools, these interpretations have direct implications for the nature of educational approaches in teaching about civics and citizenship.

> Education for citizenship in its minimal interpretation requires only induction into basic knowledge of institutionalised rules concerning rights and obligations. Maximal interpretations require education which develops critical and reflective abilities and capacities for self-determination and autonomy (Evans, 1995, p. 5).

In particular, the adoption of any form of maximalist approach requires attention to what students learn from the way the school is organized, and from their prescribed or implied place within that school—the ways in which they are treated. At one stage, this was often referred to as 'the hidden curriculum', though it has now become more common to talk of the impact of the 'school ethos'—policies, programmes, organization—on student learning.

This applies at a number of levels, from the form of decision-making in the school as a whole, to the degree and nature of curriculum negotiation within classrooms, to the nature and purpose of learning tasks developed within the school.

When I think about what I learned (and then later taught) about citizenship, I can recognize two distinct, and sometimes contradictory, elements. On the one hand, formal content emphasized concepts of living in a democratic State, ranging from minimalist views of the citizen as a consumer and exerciser of rights, to more maximalist views of the need for a commitment to a participatory and democratic approach to decision-making. On the other hand, the school organization excluded or marginalized the exercise of student roles in the 'democracy' of the school. Student organizations were either non-existent or extremely limited in their scope; students were seldom represented in the school's decision-making.

When we consider how we organize our schools, and when we consider how we organize learning and knowledge, what are we saying to students?

Citizenship education across the curriculum

Being a citizen is not just about being involved in the governance of a community. It is also concerned with having a valued and recognized role within that community. It is who we see we are in connection with that community that is, in essence, our citizenship.

If it is 'the array of roles that individuals can play in forming, maintaining and changing their communities' (Owen, 1996) that shapes citizenship, then the role of citizenship education is to ensure that young people have opportunities to participate in those roles. The arguments about recognizing and supporting the active citizenship of students therefore have bearing across the curriculum, not just within the subject areas (e.g. studies of society and the environment) mandated to teach civics and citizenship content.

Thus the critical challenge for us, in thinking about how and what students learn about civics and citizenship is: how can we develop curriculum and governance approaches that enable students to build upon their civic competencies, and assert and learn from their roles as valued citizens? How can we ensure that we build both 'learning about' and 'learning to' into citizenship education? These are challenges for all subject areas to teach about active citizenship, by the respect and consideration they give to students within their teaching approaches, and also in

their capacity to support and create real roles of community value for young people as part of the learning within those subjects. This paper will consider practical ways in which this can happen.

When we consider what we teach students and what we ask them to do (i.e. the value and productivity of their learning), what are we saying to students about their citizenship?

Deferred outcomes

We might ask also at this point why these issues are now emerging as important.

Various writers have argued that there have been fundamental and continuing changes to the role of young people in our society. For example, Wyn has pointed to the relatively recent invention of 'youth' as a category and the consequences of this:

> One of the central features of a categorical concept of youth is its positioning of youth in relation to the future. However the 'future' for which youth are positioned from a categorical perspective is an ahistorical, static notion of adulthood, based on a supposed dichotomy between the categories of adulthood and youth rather than on an understanding of the complex continuities through the life cycle. Conceptually, the positioning of youth in this way obscures the experiences of young people by relegating them to a less significant realm than those who have reached 'adult' life. Young people are seen as 'non-adults', a group who are in deficit. They are citizens of the future, rather than citizens in the present (Wyn, 1995, p. 52).

The great majority of learning activities carried out in schools provide purposes for students that are deferred; these learning activities are immediately productive only in terms of being seen and marked by the teacher. Students are told: 'learn this because it will be valuable to you later'; 'learn about citizenship because one day you will be a citizen'.

Some students will be content to defer the outcomes of their learning—because they recognize that they do have a secured future; others, faced with greater uncertainties about jobs, health, livelihoods and so on, will become passive collaborators or active resisters. But all of these students are absorbing a more profound message: that learning and its organization through schools devalue their experiences, their knowledge, their present situation.

This is perhaps most significant in the area of citizenship. By deferring the outcomes of learning, and by devaluing students' present situation, we are conveying strong messages to students about how Australian institutions regard their participation. We are, in fact, teaching about 'active citizenship' in the most negative way.

Passivity versus agency

Coleman, writing in 1972, also pointed to change in the roles of young people, and to its consequences:

In the family, the young remain, while the activities from which they could learn have moved out; in the workplace, the activities from which they could learn remain, but the young themselves have been excluded [...] The student role of young persons has become enlarged to the point where that role constitutes the major portion of their youth. But the student role is not a role of taking action and experiencing consequences [...] It is a relatively passive role, always in preparation for action, but never acting [...] The consequences of the expansion of the student role, and the action poverty it implies for the young, has been an increased restiveness among the young. They are shielded from responsibility, and they become irresponsible; they are held in a dependent status, and they come to act as dependents; they are kept away from productive work, and they become unproductive (Coleman, 1972, p. 5–8).

In response, there has been some recent attention to classroom curriculum processes that include students more actively in curriculum implementation and in curriculum and classroom decision-making. For example, approaches outlined originally in the United States and now used in many schools in Australia emphasize the role of students in negotiating curriculum:

[...] to help young people broaden and deepen their understanding of themselves and their world. For this reason it begins with questions and concerns they have about these two areas. The themes around which the curriculum is organized are found at points where questions and concerns about self-interest [come into contact] with those about the world (Beane, 1993, p. 6).

Yet even here, these approaches can easily devolve into trivial exercises in temporary engagement. Negotiated curriculum processes have concentrated largely on the what and how of the curriculum: decisions about what we will learn, about how we will make such decisions, and (in the presence of increasingly rigid frameworks) about how we will learn. Little attention has been paid to the larger and more difficult issue of encouraging and supporting student participation in debate on why learning something is valuable or of the usefulness of that learning.

It is no surprise that students continue to bemoan the lack of relevance of the curriculum, even as we seek ways to make the activities we design more relevant to their perceived interests, and seek to centre the curriculum in student interests and needs, rather than abstract academic pursuits.

So it is argued here that there is an increasing need for engaging students more directly with the immediate purposes for their learning. The curriculum must include the capacity and willingness of students to act upon their learning—to produce something of value, to be valued and to value one's self as someone who can 'make a difference'—that goes beyond the teacher and beyond the classroom.

Elsewhere this has been referred to as 'social agency' and linked strongly and directly to concepts of 'full citizenship' or 'active citizenship' (Watts, 1995, p. 93). Watts goes on to draw out some implications of such an approach, and includes schools as a principal site for the exercise of agency:

Agency is about people having access both in their schooling and in their jobs and their community lives to open and democratic structures and processes. It is about ensuring that peo-

ple have real choices about their lifestyle. Agency is about ensuring that people can work collectively with those who matter in their lives to prioritize and make decisions; and that all the relevant organizations and institutions will enhance their capacity and their right to control their own destinies. Any idea of citizenship-as-agency implies that we all must have the right both to participate and not to participate in community decision-making. Agency is about being listened to and treated with dignity, respect and mutuality, and it is about working and living in a non-authoritarian environment (Watts, 1995, p. 101).

Value

These views argue for broad changes to teaching and learning within primary and secondary schools. They argue for approaches in which student roles of community value are created.

In deferring learning outcomes, in 'negotiating' trivial curriculum pursuits, in engaging in only passive or diversionary activities within schools, we are teaching students their lack of value to our present society. We are allowing creativity, commitment and enthusiasm little or no place. We are saying that 'being cool' is about being irrelevant.

In developing a 'theory of the value of youth', Pearl has suggested that 'If youth are to be valued, they must be of the society—participants, not recipients. That is the crux of any theory of valuing youth' (Pearl, Grant & Wenk, 1978). These ideas also underlie the approach adopted by various school networks in the United States as the 'Foxfire Approach'; here, basic principles of student choice and action around projects which have community value and academic integrity are the basis for learning (see Foxfire Fund, 1995).

In Australia, such approaches embrace both the arena of classroom curriculum approaches and of school governance under the general heading of 'student participation'.

These approaches see young people as bringing skills, views and experiences to their education. They see that learning takes place most effectively when it is active, relevant to the needs of the learner, and recognizes the background and present situation of the learner. Learning builds upon the strengths of young people, and values their contributions as partners in the learning process.

Ideas of student-centred approaches in education are not new. Early in the twentieth century, Dewey (1916) articulated principles and approaches which are now being rediscovered. While building upon these principles, ideas of student participation in education go even further to assert that schools must develop ways in which their students' education can contribute to outcomes of recognized community value.

Student participation

In education, the word 'participation' has been used in various ways. It can mean 'being there' (as in participation or retention rates); it can mean 'taking part' (as in performing activities over which students may have no say); it can mean 'having a

say' (students speaking out about issues). All these are important, but we mean much more than these definitions when we talk of 'student participation'. We mean an active role for students in decisions about and implementation of education policies and practices and of the key issues that determine the nature of the world in which they live (Holdsworth, 1986, p. 6).

This implies that participation must value the contribution that students make, meet genuine needs (i.e. be about real things), have an impact or consequence that extends beyond the participants (i.e. outside the classroom), be challenging to participants, and provide the opportunity for planning, acting and reflecting. Student participation must involve activities that are valuable and make sense in three ways:

- *to the participants*—students are working on issues they choose, that make sense to them, and in which they are valued;
- *to the community*—the community sees the issues as valuable ones to be worked on, and in which students can add something of value to that community; and
- *academically*—the participation meets the academic or curriculum goals that schools are required to achieve.

These principles then provide an essential checklist by which we can determine whether a particular proposal is of worth. Is it driven by student choice and enthusiasm? Does it produce something of real value to the community? Does it meet the learning goals of the school or the subject?

ARENAS OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION

There are two major arenas in which student participation is seen as developing: in school governance and in the curriculum. The existence of participation in both these arenas is important and complementary.

In school governance

This involves students directly or through representatives in participation in decision-making about educational issues. In turn, this occurs through:

- students on committees such as school council, curriculum committee and regional board; and
- student-run organizations such as student representative councils or junior school councils, where students can discuss, debate and decide their position on issues facing them.

In both areas, students are regarded as having valuable perspectives, information and skills to contribute to the school's decision-making. Student views are taken seriously, and students are supported in developing democratic structures that ensure the views of all students are represented.

Further evidence is now emerging on the importance of such aspects of the school curriculum to the development of active citizenship, and Owen reports on a recent study based in the United States.

> Just released in Australia is a quite remarkable study of 'civic voluntarism' in the United States that suggests, on the basis of some 15,000 preliminary interviews and a further 2,500 in-depth interviews, that while schools can have a very important role to play in the 'pathways' to civic participation, the provision of actual civics courses does not (Verba et al, 1995). Rather, the study showed that it was opportunities for participation (and therefore learning) in the processes of school governance, together with opportunities to discuss contemporary political issues of interest to the students, that were more important [...] The US study suggests, very forcibly indeed, that it is how we run our schools, rather than what we teach in them, that will determine levels of active citizenship. Changing curricula is difficult enough; developing genuinely inclusive and democratic systems of school governance even more so. Moreover, these sorts of changes are less likely to result from Commonwealth-inspired funding initiatives than from the agitation of teachers, parents and students themselves (Owen, 1996).

Many schools have some form of student organization—and these have recently developed most rapidly in primary schools. While these groups have traditionally been seen as having limited functions (fund-raising and organization of social activities in many cases), schools which are serious about supporting student participation continue to grapple with issues involved in extending the role of student organizations as a vital part of the school's overall decision-making structure.

When do the student groups meet—at lunchtime or as part of the curriculum? Who is elected—the popular crowd or a variety of students representative of interests of the student body? How does the school recognize and credit students' council participation as part of the school's curriculum? These are some of the concerns being explored.

Student representation also occurs within the broader decision-making structure of the school, on the various committees and working parties that make decisions and recommendations on policies and programmes. Students are directly represented on many school councils and on regional and state-wide bodies.

This structural participation raises further issues for representatives; reporting back and seeking direction from other students, in the student council and then through discussion at home group or sub-school levels, become important for all students' development and learning.

In curriculum

This involves students in decision-making and action through classroom learning partnerships, and through specific 'student participation' projects or approaches. Curriculum negotiation is basic to all such approaches and can occur at all levels—though it has been described most clearly in senior school curriculum (e.g. Holdsworth, 1986, p. 30).

Even within centrally determined curriculum, schools have discovered and developed opportunities for negotiation of learning methods, but in other courses, curriculum partnerships between teachers and students have taken joint responsibility for setting goals, canvassing needs and background, identifying appropriate

content, devising learning methods and putting appropriate assessment and evaluation measures in place.

The most extensive examples of student participation are seen in the wide range of curriculum projects that have been developed within schools. These can be:

- *community development projects* in which students create resources and services of value to their communities. Examples of these projects have included:
  - — cross-age or peer tutoring in which students teach other students, within their own school, in neighbouring schools, or in community facilities such as child care centres;
  - — media productions: students have produced community newspapers (some multilingual) and directories, resource guides, books of oral histories, and radio and television programmes; and
  - — job creation through enterprise education.
- *community research and action projects* in which students investigate and act on issues facing their community. Examples of these projects have included:
  - — student research initiatives on social issues such as youth homelessness, in which they write reports and propose community action;
  - — students' environmental studies; and
  - — students working as evaluators of health projects and so on.

There are long lists of practical examples in all these areas. It is important that documentation and sharing of practical initiatives continue to occur.[1]

Attacks and deflections

In developing such approaches in Australia over the past twenty-five years, it has been possible to recognize some of the ways in which these basic ideas have been misinterpreted, deflected, co-opted and marginalized. By identifying at least some of these limitations, it is also possible to suggest ways in which some of the difficulties may be overcome.

VOICE

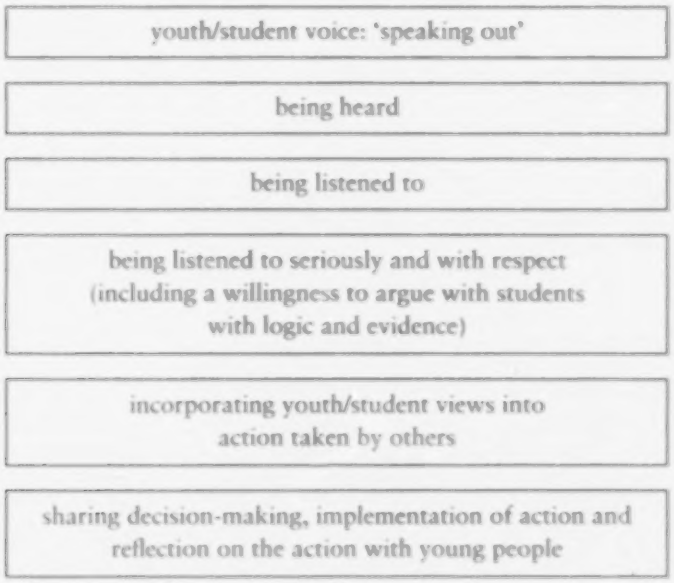
First, ideas of student participation have been seen simply as 'providing a voice' for young people and this, if taken literally, may serve to limit possibilities for programmes.

A simple focus on 'being heard' can merely serve to make it appear that young people are active participants; this may, in reality, act as a 'safety valve' to ease pressures for real changes in decision-making or simply be a way of letting decision-makers feel as if they are 'doing the right thing'.

Some recent student forums have realized the limitations on 'youth voice' and are explicitly making bridges from the concept of 'voice' to ideas of 'agency' or 'action'. One changed its name from 'Teenroar' to 'Teenaction': 'The idea is to build

on what we know and rather than just 'roar'—'act' on implementation of programmes which will positively address relevant issues in the youth culture' (Osmotherly, 1998). For many years, the concept of a community 'participation ladder' has been useful for distinguishing ideas of 'consultation' and 'involvement' as more limited than ideas of 'participation' and 'action'. In a similar way, it is possible to distinguish between views of 'youth/student voice' and characterize the stages on the way to the real inclusion of young people in their communities.

FIGURE 1. Student participation ladder


youth/student voice: 'speaking out'
being heard
being listened to
being listened to seriously and with respect
(including a willingness to argue with students
with logic and evidence)
incorporating youth/student views into
action taken by others
sharing decision-making, implementation of action and
reflection on the action with young people

This development has been seen as a move from 'youth voice' to 'youth agency', i.e. towards an increase in the capacity and willingness of young people to act upon issues that affect them.

In working with primary and secondary students, it has been recognized that student groups tend to work in modes of 'do', 'ask' and 'share' (Holdsworth, 1998). While there are some things that student groups can do by themselves, these tend to be relatively trivial in most cases and marginalize the groups into, for example, fund-raising or social roles; while there are some things that student groups will need to ask others to do (making requests or demands), these tend to lead to rejection and to reinforcement of students' powerlessness. While it is recognized that the capacity and willingness to both 'do' and 'ask' is important for the individual development of a student's own agency, the more important structural challenge has been to encourage a movement towards the 'share' role in which students (as other parties do) work with others through accountable, decision-making partnerships.

At the moment, however, with very few exceptions, students (and young people generally) remain locked out of such partnerships, relegated to asking, encouraged to have a 'voice', but no more.

EXCLUSIVITY

Secondly, there has been a disturbing trend for some time to move attention from participation to representation and then to leadership—and to focus upon developing the skills of the few students elected or appointed to elite positions. Similarly, while curriculum programmes such as cross-age tutoring have traditionally been inclusive (and even provided alternative positions of responsibility and value to those students otherwise excluded and marginalized) there has been a similar degradation of such programme intentions in favour of the already advantaged students 'who will best represent the school'. For some schools, caught in situations where every action is thought of as 'selling' the image of the school, educational outcomes have become secondary to those of public relations.

In a process of choosing only the 'best students' to be tutors or of setting up student council elections that reward the already articulate and 'in the know', the forms and activities of participation hide a commitment to the selection of the few for continued success. The loss of equity criteria is alarming. Whose voices are being heard? Those who speak most coherently? Those with whom we most readily agree?

This observation is reinforced by recent research at the Youth Research Centre (at the University of Melbourne), in which many young people alienated from schooling were highly disparaging of student organizations, seeing them neither as effective nor as representing them (Dwyer et al., 1998).

In classroom forums, and in forums for enabling students to 'enact their voices', we need to ensure that all voices are heard and that all students are enabled to walk the bridge from voice to action. That will mean taking specific measures to overcome the legacies of silence, distrust and inactivity that have traditionally and particularly locked some students out. It will be necessary to be vigilant against tendencies to co-opt participation programmes and see them as disposable 'add-ons' or as only accessible to already successful students.

The same forums mentioned earlier have shown that it is possible to be conscious of these trends and to work to maintain a focus on equity issues. While Theobald reports that 'the *most committed* members of this generation want to have a voice in the on-going dialogue' (Theobald, 1997; my emphasis), a press report of a youth forum which starts by quoting his ideas, noted that 'one of the striking things about this project is that it has managed to engage young people who are not normally active on student representative councils or other formal groups' (Guy, 1998).

Continued attention to selective ideas of 'leadership' or 'participation' may indeed finally be self-defeating. Where governance or curriculum activities have excluded the broad range of students and have bypassed their interests, concerns and abilities, these students have grown increasingly cynical and angry at what they see as another form of coercion and deflection. The initiatives fail.

TOKENISM

Thirdly, the focus of what is regarded as student participation can become limited and limiting. It is, unfortunately, still common to find that both students and teach-

ers simply think that some form of student organization is 'what student participation is all about'. This can lead both to the token participation of students in 'safe issues' and, particularly, to the exclusion of student participation from what is central to the school—the learning and teaching that occur there.

Even relatively forward-looking approaches to civics and citizenship education have talked as if 'representative democracy' defines the total scope of what being an 'active citizen' is, rather than acknowledging that having and exercising a valuable role within communities is at the core of our citizenship. School-based approaches have consequently focused on the need to build on existing examples of student democracy and leadership, but to the exclusion of curriculum initiatives. Learning about active citizenship in schools will include support for active student voice and participation through student councils and within various areas of school governance, but it must also include fundamental changes to the ways in which we structure the teaching and learning in classrooms—particularly towards rethinking how we share purpose and demonstrate authentic outcomes.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION: MORE THAN ACTIVE LEARNING

Finally, ideas of student participation can be limited by being seen as merely 'student-centred education', 'active learning' or 'creative teaching'. It is thought that by having a 'hands-on' curriculum in which students are 'doing things', or conducting simulation activities, that they are active participants.

The limitations of such a view of student participation need to be challenged; the final section of this paper provides one practical example drawn from the MindMatters: Mental Health Education Programme developed by a consortium that included the Youth Research Centre.

Doing the two-step: examples of the educational process

Student participation involves more than student activity. Active learning may be only the first step in the dance; when we talk about student participation we actually mean doing the two-step.

STEP 1: MOVING FROM PASSIVE INSTRUCTION TO ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Inquiry-based learning approaches are characterized by an active role for young people in investigation and presentation. This is the first step in which we move from presentation of information by the teacher, and relatively passive responses from students. It is characterized by teachers asking: 'how can I organize for the students to do it instead of me doing it?'

For example, in a lesson about the nature and range of local mental health services, a teacher-centred approach would involve providing students with a list of the appropriate organizations; classroom activities might then be focused on answer-

ing worksheet questions about this information. The first step towards participation would be to change this approach by having students carry out the local investigation. They might, as a group or in small teams, compile the list of services (asking and answering questions about where to find information) and perhaps interview a range of these services in order to write descriptive paragraphs about what they do. This information would then be disseminated within the class and discussed.

The teacher role has moved from one of presenter of information to one of organizer of learning. The student role has moved from recipient of facts to active searcher for information and meaning.

But this is just the first step.

STEP 2: MOVING FROM ACTIVITY TO VALUE CREATION

When we talk meaningfully of developing student participation, we really need to be thinking of approaches that go beyond this. These approaches also involve creating real and recognized roles of community value for the students and for their learning. Each example of active learning can be 'pushed' a step further to create engagement with meaningful outcomes.

To pursue the curriculum example, we could start by asking questions about the collection of information: 'why do we want to find this out?' and 'what are we going to do with the information?' Several possible outcomes might then emerge from class discussion: the students could publish the information they have discovered in a school newspaper, in a community forum or newspaper, or through a small booklet or pamphlet which is distributed in the area.

Students are now learning for a direct purpose. They are adding something of community value to their learning, and are being seen as valuable community members, doing valuable things. These are all direct indicators of enhanced mental health.

The challenges for teachers in doing the 'student participation two-step' are to be:

- *inventive*: we must always be seeking ways for real and valuable outcomes (authentic assessment) of learning—and that might mean recognizing and seizing local opportunities as they arise; and
- *bold*: willing to leave 'safe' or meticulously pre-planned territory and embark on exciting uncertainty—a dance of learning with the students.

Note

1. The national newsletter *Connect* has provided a means for this to happen for almost twenty years. Connect Journal Supporting Student Participation, 1–12 Brooke Street, Northcote 3070 Victoria, Australia.

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EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION[1]

Kamal Malhotra

The context

We are now firmly in the dawn of a new millennium. The past two decades have seen some of the most rapid and momentous changes in both the global and regional environments in recent human history. These include:

- the supposed victory of the neo-liberal economic and political agenda until the recent South-East Asia-led global economic and financial crisis;
- this agenda's concomitant strategies and processes of accelerating economic globalization, regionalization and liberalization;
- the inevitable push for the privatization of both the productive and social policy arenas across the world as the panacea for all ills, regardless of a nation's historical, social or cultural context (and the consequent weakening and fragmentation of the nation-State as the fundamental unit of sovereignty in an increasing number of critical areas);
- the largely irreversible revolution in computing and other aspects of information technology which have a direct bearing on education policies and strategies;

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- the less inevitable corporate, transnational and other capital flows of unprecedented magnitude unevenly spread around the globe, which increasingly dwarf the role of ever-diminishing overseas development assistance (ODA) and public expenditure—formerly the mainstay of education expenditure;
- dramatically altered notions and definitions of public and private goods (with direct implications for education) at the behest of international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) and their major shareholders such as the United States and other members of the G-7; and
- the absence of new, appropriate or adequate global, regional or national mediation institutions or mechanisms in a post-Cold War unipolar world with narrowly self-interested global, regional and national political leadership.

These are just some aspects of this new era, which some have called the New World Order and others the New World Disorder. These events have had and continue to have far-reaching implications for both the policy design and implementation of programmes involving basic education and other public goods.[2] It should be self-evident from the nature and the magnitude of these changes that the challenges lying ahead for education policy in the current globalization era and paradigm are truly formidable.

Key challenges for education policy

The current patterns of globalization present both positive and negative possibilities for education policy. Key questions include the following: who is likely to benefit from or take advantage of the positive opportunities presented and who is likely to be a loser? What is likely to happen to the already existing inequities and gaps in education service delivery, especially between the haves and have-nots? What is the purpose of education in this new globalized era and how will success and failure be judged? Related to the latter, what criteria will be used for establishing quality benchmarks?

While this paper cannot comprehensively address all of these important questions, it is its central contention that we are in significant danger of dramatically increasing the gulf between the educational haves and have-nots in an irreversible manner, crippling the latter in an era when access to accumulated wealth and income or portable and marketable professional education and skills are the only two recognized 'virtues' in the increasingly dominant global marketplace. These two attributes appear to be the only ones that ensure that populations can take advantage of and benefit from the positive opportunities of globalization.

In a situation where there is already a staggering and seemingly irreversible gulf between those with wealth and income and those without (e.g. the UNDP's *Human development report 1998* states that the world's top 200 billionaires now have wealth equal to the poorest 47% of the world's population—almost three billion people), the last thing we should desire is a national and global education system that mirrors the same gulf—yet that is the direction that we are seemingly headed in!

Indeed, even if the current dominant patterns and processes of globalization had not put a premium on secondary and tertiary education, and if notions of public and private goods had not so dramatically altered in favour of the latter (and, by extension, in favour of those with the ability to pay), there was already a yawning gulf between the haves and have-nots. Such a 'convergence of disadvantage' was acknowledged a decade ago by the Jomtien, Thailand Education for All (EFA) conference. Even then it was recognized that educating the world's illiterate or semi-literate population would remain a daunting challenge well into the next century.

In today's context of globalization, however, the challenge of even achieving universal primary education is immeasurably greater. Perhaps more importantly, even in the increasingly unlikely event that universal primary education is achieved by the target year of 2015 set by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, it will be inadequate for the needs of the new era. This is because primary education by itself is no longer sufficient for obtaining decent and satisfying employment (in the definition of the International Labour Organization's Director-General, Juan Somavia, in his recent speech at UNCTAD X in Bangkok on 15 February 2000), staying employed in times of economic crisis or benefiting from economic globalization in a long-term, sustainable manner.

Essential education in a fast globalizing world

It is now increasingly recognized that basic education in the globalization era should include much more than primary education. While this idea is now gaining acceptance, it has yet to be widely acknowledged or understood that even the achievement of universal secondary education in today's world will leave an enormous gulf between those that are benefiting from the potential opportunities of the new global era and those who are increasingly marginalized and excluded.

This is true for individuals and countries, and indeed even for entire regions (e.g. sub-Saharan Africa). The most telling empirical evidence of this is the sad irony that as a direct consequence of the recent economic and financial crisis, even Asian 'miracle economy' countries (which had done exceedingly well over the past few decades in achieving the near universalization of primary education) are now further from the 2015 education targets than they were only a few years ago.

The example of Thailand, with a primary education level of over 90% before the crisis but a secondary education level of less than 20%—perhaps the lowest for countries at its level of per capita GDP—is instructive in illustrating this point. Even if the value (and therefore purpose and quality) of education is reduced and narrowed to its most basic instrumental function (employment and material gain, another unfortunate trend in the current era) Thailand's 1997–99 experience (its crisis of export competitiveness, which was partly due to the crisis in its secondary and tertiary education policy and strategies to date) vividly highlights the limitations of an education strategy that is over-reliant on primary education for a narrow instrumental economic purpose to the detriment of other levels of education and investment in research and training.

Ironically, Thailand's ability to implement the important lessons of its crisis and take corrective action has also been severely, if not fatally, compromised by the crisis itself. This is because the financial crisis hit Thailand just before it approved a new democratic constitution that promised universal access to twelve years of education. The country had also shown incipient signs of wanting to translate its belated recognition of its failed secondary, tertiary, and education research and training strategies into implementation strategies. The crisis appears to have not only laid to rest Thailand's secondary and tertiary education expansion plans, but also served to significantly undermine the country's hitherto impressive achievements in primary education, making them almost impossible to sustain. In fact, it is widely believed that primary school enrolment rates have significantly slipped, with the situation in secondary education even more dismal.

A key lesson from the Thai example is that in the current conditions, countries prioritizing primary, secondary and tertiary education in a sequential and phased manner do so at their own peril. While in the context of globalization, the goal of universal primary education remains as non-controversial and elusive as ever, an exclusive emphasis on it alone is clearly much more simplistic and inadequate than ever before.

Countries now need to pursue universal primary and secondary education as simultaneous goals with all their resource, research and training implications. They also have to pursue tertiary-level education more vigorously and with greater equitable access than in the past because such higher-level education can almost be redefined as essential primary education in the new global knowledge era. Professional education and skills that are portable and globally marketable can only come from this higher level of education.

Such a redefinition of basic education has clear implications for our concept of public goods. Rather than moving towards a minimalist definition of public goods that only includes primary-level education (for example, as promoted by the World Bank), there is an urgent need to redefine education at the secondary and tertiary levels as essential public goods. Countries that have done so over the years (such as Germany and some Scandinavian and erstwhile socialist countries) are likely to be in a much better position to compete in the global economy in the long run than the United States and other countries that have historically not treated tertiary education as an essential public good.

Education policy in a neo-liberal economic era

In this context, it is counterproductive and even dangerous to subordinate the definition and de facto establishment of the national and global education policy framework at the secondary and tertiary levels to the economic policy and budgetary prescriptions of neo-liberal economy ideologues who suggest abdicating most things (including key aspects of secondary and tertiary education policy) to the 'magic hand' of the market or to 'decentralization' in the name of the people. Such a policy framework, which is unfortunately prevalent in most of the developing world

today, often with the explicit support of the IMF and World Bank, will almost certainly be a recipe for growing and irreversible global inequalities in educational opportunity and access. Those who start off with higher levels of education and the means and ability to pay for it will almost inevitably leap ahead while those who start off illiterate and poor in material terms will be left irretrievably behind.

The illustration of user fees in education is one example. Such fees refer to the neo-liberal economy influenced and inspired trend towards obtaining direct financial contributions from users for education services at all levels, but especially secondary and tertiary ones. The introduction of user fees has been the result both of a forced and severe fiscal austerity and the rise in the influence of the market-based globalization paradigm.

User fees have been accompanied by and implemented in a climate of growing criticism of the role of the State and its performance. Free services have been viewed by the international financial institutions and key G-7 countries as ineffective, inefficient, unsustainable and inequitable while the private financing of service delivery has, in contrast, been viewed as enhancing the equity, efficiency, sustainability and effectiveness of social service provision.

Yet there is a growing body of empirical evidence on the negative effects of user financing[3]--particularly, but not restricted to, access to such services by the poor. In the context of the human development approach that has gained in strength over the years, these empirical outcomes have dented the once impenetrable armour of orthodox neo-liberal economists.

Unlike in the case of health care, even under a State-supported 'free' system, parental contributions to overall education costs are significant while the opportunity costs of attending school (especially for boy children from poor households) have been and remain extremely high.

For example, a 1992 household budget survey in Kenya showed that households' direct contributions covered 34% of the total cost of primary education.[4] This proportion was considerably higher in the Lao People's Democratic Republic according to a more recent World Bank study. Meanwhile, the extremely high primary school drop-out rates amongst poor communities even in a situation of 'free' schooling, especially in times of crisis such as the current one in East and South-East Asia, are illustrative of the extremely high opportunity costs of schooling in terms of daily and short-term forgone household income.

One might reasonably ask whether the introduction of user fees would make much difference to school attendance, especially since proponents argue that poor families when interviewed indicate that they are willing to pay for education because they see it as important.

Such arguments miss at least two crucial points. First, there is a major difference between willingness and ability to pay, especially for poor families whose willingness to pay will, by definition, always be much greater than their ability. Second, given that even in 'free' education systems at the primary level, where parental contribution is a significant proportion of the total household expenditure of poor families, even small increases as a result of the introduction of user fees are likely to

result in negative outcomes, such as increasing school drop-out rates among poor families. Indeed, such increases are likely to push them over the threshold of what a family can afford for education.

The latter point, more generally stated, suggests that as with health care, the poor are likely to be more sensitive to the price of education than the rich. As a result of a relatively higher price elasticity of demand, if the cost of education goes up even marginally, their demand for it will go down by a disproportionately greater amount. For example, a study in Peru[5] found that for a given increase in fees, there was a much higher reduction in secondary school attendance for rural households belonging to the poorest 25% of the population than for those belonging to the wealthiest 25%—by a factor as large as two or three times! Similarly, the introduction of fees for primary school in Ghana in 1992 led to a 4% decline in first-year enrolments and even the World Bank acknowledged that this was directly related to the affordability of school fees.[6] This also appears to have been the case in Zimbabwe, where enrolments at the primary level declined by approximately 5% after fees were introduced, despite a population increase in children of school-going age and a simultaneous increase in enrolments in non-governmental, free schools. In Malawi, increases in school fees were met with declines in school enrolments[7] and when these fairly low school fees were eliminated in 1994, primary school enrolments soared by an astonishing 50%. According to both the World Bank and independent studies, similar declines were recorded in Côte d'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, all of which increased their primary school enrolments significantly after abolishing primary school fees.[8]

Booth et al. found that the introduction of cost recovery programmes in health and education in Zambia led to 'a clear pattern in terms of both gender and the socio-economic condition of households'[9], with girl children and poorer households being negatively affected overwhelmingly more times than boys (presumably because of the relative premium placed on them by parents) and richer or better-off households.

As in the case of health, proponents of user fees for education have argued that fees at the primary level can be increased without decreasing enrolments if the quality of education is simultaneously and sufficiently improved. However, this claim appears hard to empirically validate, given the high price sensitivity of poor families to the cost of education. Moreover, the gap between school revenues and the levels of expenditure that would be required to deliver quality education is so great in most developing countries that it would be unrealistic to assume that any amount of parental contributions towards school expenditure would be able to increase the education quality by a sufficient amount to make a difference to increased school drop-out rates as a result of the introduction of user fees.

What should the future be?

For UNESCO, it appears that the key problem (as already identified by the Delors Report) in the context of worldwide globalization and interdependence is:

that of a gulf opening between a minority who are capable of finding their way successfully about this new world that is coming into being and the majority who feel that they are at the mercy of events and have no say in the future of society, with the dangers that entails of a set-back to democracy and widespread revolt.[10]

UNESCO says that it is committed to bridge this gulf through education. While this is a laudable objective, it is hard to see it as realistic or achievable in the current process of globalization. This is because we urgently need the very investments that are being so significantly cut back and denied by neo-liberal economy ideologues and government financial technocrats the world over.

We also need a definition of public goods that is much closer to the maximalist position when it comes to education rather than the minimalist view held by the World Bank, other influential international financial institutions and G-7 governments. Mathematics and financial flows are dominating human development and human beings in the current globalization paradigm and as even James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, implied in his October 1998 'social exclusion' address to the Annual Meeting of the World Bank and IMF in Washington, DC,[11] this is not ethically, socially, politically or even economically sustainable for either the industrialized or developing countries in an increasingly interdependent world. The reasons for this were more forcefully and convincingly made by Juan Somavia at the UNCTAD X conference. The urgency of listening to this message is increasing.

While some aspects of globalization (e.g. the information technology revolution) are perhaps irreversible, other aspects are not (such as those that result in certain monetary, fiscal and trade policy choices). As a result, the current economic predilection for fiscal austerity and tight monetary policy at all costs cannot be taken as immutable and unchangeable. We urgently need public investment and ODA for education at all levels on a much larger scale. We also need more comprehensive and higher-quality education than we now have. The historical and empirical experience of all industrialized countries and even those among the 'miracle' economies that have done relatively well in this area is clear testimony to the importance of public investment and state intervention at all levels of the education ladder, not just at the primary level.

This lesson is even more relevant today. Yet, with the regression of the State's role, its concomitant reduced institutional and resource generation capabilities and the introduction of user fees and other privatization measures in education taking hold in country after country—with profoundly negative effects for the poor and all our children—we appear to be moving further away from the desired goal. Indeed, education in this era of globalization appears to be headed in the opposite direction from the one it should be moving in.

As a result, nothing short of a major rethink of economic neo-liberalism and its application to education and broader social policy will change this disastrous course. The world's poor and vulnerable youth are unable to go to private institutions or afford the user fees that are the result of the increased privatization of one

of society's most historically important, time-tested and sustainable public goods. We had hoped that such a paradigm rethink would be one of the positive outcomes of the latest global economic and financial crisis. Ironically, this crisis began in the very countries that had invested in primary education but have since found, to their enormous cost, that neither its quantity or quality is appropriate or adequate in an era of fast-track economics and finance dominated globalization. Unfortunately, we find ourselves in the first few months of the new millennium contemplating mere cosmetic changes to the global economic and financial architecture, not a major conceptual rethink. This is not the route to a broad-based knowledge economy, which will have to be premised on not just primary but secondary education for all.

Notes

1. The paper on which this version is based was prepared by the author when he was Co-Director, Focus on the Global South, Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, Bangkok, Thailand and Regional Adviser, Save the Children Fund-UK, Southeast and East Asia Regional Office (SEAPRO). The original paper was prepared for the UNESCO-ACEID Conference 'Secondary Education and Youth at the Crossroads', 10–13 November 1998, Bangkok, Thailand.
2. Public goods in this context are those whose benefits extend to society as a whole and not just to the individual who receives them. As such, market-driven and based pricing policies for public goods that are determined by individual demand and supply for the goods in question will, by definition, be inappropriate and inadequate in determining their real benefit to society. Historically, it was widely agreed that such goods, because of their broad societal and inter-generational benefits, should be provided free to the individual by the State, but this consensus has broken down in the past two decades. Other historically agreed public goods are those with large production or distribution economies of scale or those whose production and/or provision by the State is considered desirable because of a wider public interest. These two latter categories are not the subject of this paper.
3. For an excellent summary of the literature see S. Reddy, *Is there a case for user fees in basic social services?*, Harvard University and Centre for Development Economics, Delhi School of Economics, India. (Paper presented at the Second Applied Development Economics Workshop, 6–10 January 1996.)
4. *Kenya poverty assessment*, Washington, DC, World Bank, 1995.
5. P. Gertler and P. Glewwe, *The willingness to pay for education in developing countries: evidence from rural Peru,* Washington, DC, World Bank, 1989.
6. *Ghana: primary school development project*, Washington, DC, World Bank, 1993. (Staff Appraisal Report.)
7. M. Bray and K. Lillis, eds., *Community financing of education*, Oxford, UK, Pergamon Press, 1988.
8. *Priorities and strategies for education*, Draft Report, Washington, DC, World Bank, 1994; M. Lockheed, A. Verspoor et al., *Improving primary education in developing countries*, London, Oxford University Press, 1991.

9. D. Booth et al., *Coping with cost recovery*, Report to SIDA commissioned through the Development Studies Unit, Department of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University, Sweden, 1995.
10. *Draft declaration*, The Melbourne Conference: Education for the 21st Century in the Asia-Pacific Region, April 1998.
11. James D. Wolfensohn, *The other crisis*, presented at the annual meetings of the World Bank and IMF, Washington, DC, 6 October 1998.

HIGHER EDUCATION, THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA[1]

Geoffrey I. Nwaka

This paper reviews the current debate about the place of higher education in national development, and evaluates the contribution of social science research and knowledge to development policy and practice. It considers how academics in general and social scientists in particular can collaborate with policy-makers and practitioners to enrich development work, and thereby promote overall national progress.

We need to reassess the role and methods of the social sciences because we seem to be faced with an ironic situation in which the increase in social science knowledge and writing coincides with the escalation of social and political problems, and the general deterioration of living standards in Africa. Forty-five of Africa's fifty-three countries, including Nigeria, are now listed among the world's least developed, with very high levels of illiteracy, unemployment and disease. The United Nations estimates that Africa accounts for more than half of all war-related deaths world-wide, resulting in over 8 million refugees and displaced persons (United Nations, 1998; Gertzel, 1995). Practically all the institutions of modernization in the continent have retrogressed visibly from the promising start of the 1960s and 1970s.

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The social sciences have human culture and society as their main objects of study, and by definition ought to be in the forefront of the quest for African recovery and renewal. 'Why is so much that is said, written and spent on development having so little effect on the problems it seeks to address?' (Edwards, 1989). Questions are beginning to be asked about the returns to higher education, which is supposed to provide the national think-tank for problem-solving, and about whether researchers and policy-makers are turning to each other sufficiently for insights and mutual enlightenment.

Although useful social science knowledge is produced and disseminated outside tertiary institutions—by the media, the church, independent research organizations, etc.—the present crisis of quality and relevance in the social sciences can best be understood in the context of the institutional crisis that has plagued higher education in Nigeria in the last several years. The difficult economic conditions of the 1980s and 1990s have meant reduced funding and low priority for higher education at a time of increased demand for and rapid expansion in that sector of the education system. This has led inevitably to campus instability and a marked decline in academic quality and performance. We shall examine the relationship between government and the institutions of higher learning, especially in the contentious areas of funding and control, with a view to establishing the appropriate levels of state interest and intervention in the affairs of tertiary institutions, and the limits of the freedom and autonomy which these institutions claim for themselves. We shall consider how universities and sister institutions can improve their financial position, to lessen their dependence on government and establish a more positive partnership with both the State and the public.

To strengthen the social sciences we shall argue that the logic of the traditional disciplinary structure, which forms the basis for research and undergraduate programmes, is flawed in many respects, and is overdue for review to reflect the interrelatedness of knowledge and of development issues. The narrow discipline-based approach tends to artificially compartmentalize knowledge, and to promote a fragmented, incoherent and intellectually parochial approach to social science education and research. We shall consider alternative and complementary structures and approaches currently being canvassed by many educationists in order to promote better communication across disciplines, and integrate research and learning more closely with problem-solving and development practice (Gibbon, 1998; Wallerstein et al., 1998; Marks, 1992; Edwards, 1989; Cernea, 1995). As well, we shall explore ways to bridge the gap in communication and comprehension, and eliminate the barriers of mutual suspicion and conflict between researchers and policy-makers.

We shall conclude with some general reflections on the dilemmas of national development in the context of prolonged internal instability and the constraints imposed by a hostile international economic environment. Creditor nations and the international financial institutions appear to have taken over the policy-making and development process—with their own consultants, research agendas and pre-packaged policy directives. How can local research capacity be strengthened, and local knowledge and expertise mobilized and brought to bear more systematically on these and other challenges of national development?

100

The tribulations of higher education—and the quality crisis

Nigerian universities and other institutions of higher learning are hopelessly in decline, and now only a shadow of their former glory. Diminishing funding and the unregulated expansion in student numbers have meant that the programmes and products of these institutions, which were previously rated very highly at home and abroad, now appear to be of inferior quality. By 1990 Nigeria had established about thirty-six universities, twenty of them owned by the Federal Government, and sixty-nine polytechnics, colleges of education and technology, seventeen of them owned by the Federal Government. State governments have set up their own universities and colleges, sometimes more as a status symbol than a response to rationally established educational needs and priorities (Atteh, 1996; Biobaku, 1985). Structures and services that were originally designed for much smaller populations are now having to cope with the enormous expansion of recent years, and have therefore come under severe strain. The premier university of Ibadan, for instance, had a student population of about 14,000 in 1991, double the figure for 1972, without any appreciable addition to the institution's infrastructure.

The withdrawal of student subsidies as part of the structural adjustment programme of the mid-1980s (Nigeria, Federal Republic of, 1987) has meant that students, parents and other beneficiaries of higher education are now obliged to pay a lot more for services of questionable quality. The Coombe report (1991) presents a fairly representative picture of the appalling state of affairs in the universities:

> A student describes a day in her university life. She rises before first light, rolls up her sleeping mat, and leaves the room in the hall of residence that she shares with eleven others. The room had been furnished for two students in the early days, then bunks were installed to permit four to be housed. These days, four students are official occupants and pay the rent. To share the cost they sublet sleeping space to eight squatters. There is water crisis on campus [...] She takes her bucket and walks to join the queue at the stand pipe. On a bad day it is hours before she is able to fill her bucket and return to wash and make tea. She decides whether to take a single meal in the morning (one zero zero), noon (zero one zero), or evening (zero zero one). She goes to the (crowded) class where it is standing room only [...] Those who cannot see do their best to copy from the notebooks of those who can. After class, if the money is there, a handout can be purchased from the lecturer. It is his sideline, a supplement to his salary which has been eroded by currency devaluation and inflation. The lecturer recommends reading but the titles are not in the library (Coombe, 1991, p. 2).

Staff and students are cut off from the main currents in their fields of study, and almost completely isolated from international scholarship. Library acquisitions, especially journal subscriptions, have been drastically reduced because of shortage of foreign exchange. For the academic staff, material privations and the diminishing reward and regard for academic credentials have meant loss of morale and professional self-esteem. Those who cannot persevere are driven by the hustle for sur-

vival to seek second or third jobs, or to resort to venality, opportunism and other forms of undignified and unprofessional behaviour. This explains the deepening level of intellectual mediocrity, and the general devaluation of the status of the academic enterprise one notices in many of our institutions of higher learning (Ajayi et al., 1996; Atteh, 1996; Coombe, 1991).

These crumbling institutions cannot produce other than poor-quality students and scholarship. A recent report shows that out of 836 undergraduate programmes evaluated for accreditation in 1990/91, only 185 met the requirements in terms of academic content, staffing and physical facilities; 79 were denied accreditation, and as many as 572 received only interim accreditation (Sanyal et al., 1995). The labour market for many categories of our graduates is saturated and there are common complaints that the professional, moral and attitudinal qualities of those who find jobs are extremely disappointing. It is therefore fair to say that the overall contribution of higher education to national development can no longer be taken for granted.

Part of the explanation for this situation lies in the prolonged period of military rule and the deterioration in the internal management of tertiary institutions. The political tensions and economic traumas of the 1980s and 1990s have bedeviled State/university relations (which are uneasy even at the best of times). The pattern of government funding has meant constant questions about accountability and the extent of autonomy these institutions should enjoy. Traditionally, universities and other tertiary institutions act as the guardian of public conscience and as independent critics of government policies and of society in general. They can only perform this role well if they enjoy the right to teach and research freely, and to debate and publish their findings without censorship, or undue political or bureaucratic interference. In Nigeria, the extended period of military rule has meant that political parties and the press were either non-existent or ineffective, and therefore academics and university students tended towards greater political activism to question the legitimacy and policies of the military. Being generally intolerant of independent voices, successive regimes in the country have been brutally repressive and anti-intellectual, using their informers and agents on the campuses (and often also using the vice-chancellors and other key officials of these institutions) to harass and intimidate staff and students. Universities are accused of being dangerously anti-establishment, confrontational and potentially subversive. Officials have questioned the 'sacred cow of universities', their elitist and ivory tower posture, and their haughty distance from the practical realities of the society they were established to serve. Academics are dismissed as verbalists and theoreticians who take their prestige and privilege for granted, and should no longer be left alone to control their affairs or trusted to assess their own contribution to the nation (Sutherland-Addy, 1993; Daly, 1979).

Up to a point government has the responsibility to steer universities and other tertiary institutions away from their colonial traditions and orientation, towards the achievement of current and pressing national policy objectives, and to ensure that these institutions use the money they get judiciously in the public interest. Universities and related institutions sometimes accept that they ought to be accountable, but accountable to the taxpayers and the society in general and not exclusively

102

to each and every government that happens to come into power. As Professor Boateng once observed, while the government that pays the piper has the right to dictate the tune, it does not have the right to tell the piper how to play the tune (in Sanyal et al., 1995, p. 229). The challenge, of course, is to find an appropriate balance between state control and the internal autonomy of these institutions to ensure that academic freedom is not construed as immunity or elite privilege, or used in a selective and partisan way within and outside the campuses. We shall return later to the difficult questions of government funding and control of tertiary institutions, and how these institutions can strengthen and sustain their resource base and reduce their dependence on government, without undermining their primary mission of teaching and research.

The social sciences and national development: a tenuous link

There is an urgent need to explore the interface and the complementarity between social science research and the policy-making process. Critics complain that academic knowledge does not easily or necessarily translate to practical wisdom and action because of the many deficiencies in the methods of generating, communicating and utilizing this knowledge (Bathgeber, 1988; Glover, 1995; MacNeil, 1990). Research tends to be supply- and not demand-driven. On the supply side some of our institutions of higher learning are still very much patterned along inherited colonial lines, and tend to hold on to the old ideals of the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, or the limited objective of producing an indigenous elite for the decolonization and Africanization process. This influenced the form and content of the curriculum, which paid very little attention to direct problem-solving or to the professions as the concern of higher education (see Sawadago, 1995; Ngara, 1995).

Now governments, donor agencies and private sector interests are becoming impatient with academic research and learning not related or only remotely related to the practical problems of development. Research is often carried out in a fragmented and narrow discipline-based manner, and research results, often influenced by ideological differences among feuding scholars, are usually ambiguous, inconclusive and sometimes even contradictory. Findings are typically too critical, offering few concrete suggestions or clear options to guide policy choices. The quality of scholarship and of the knowledge generated is now constrained by the limited exposure of our social scientists to current literature and modern analytical techniques, and their isolation from global discourse and trends in their fields. Besides, scholars often tend to communicate only among themselves or with their captive student audience/market. The research findings that do emerge (for what they are worth) have very restricted circulation and adoption, as information is not widely publicized to get to where it is needed. Admittedly, the high level of illiteracy and the technical and logistical problems of publishing impose severe limits on the extent to which research findings can be disseminated; but it is still imperative to improve on the system of documentation, and the dissemination channels—to help feed

research findings into the national press and information system. This should be done in simple, non-technical and user-friendly language, without the jargon, graphs and 'methodologies' that non-specialists sometimes find irritating. Simple-language newsletters, research abstracts/findings, executive summaries, working and discussion papers as well as the regular calendars and annual reports of our institutions of higher education would be helpful in this regard (Dankckwor, 1990; Zeleza, 1997*a*; MacNeil, 1990).

This would not entirely eliminate the many barriers that get in the way of effective collaboration between researchers and policy-makers since both sides traditionally approach their tasks differently. Policy-makers and politicians are usually under pressure to produce results quickly, while good research tends to be more systematic, reflective and therefore slow. Academic researchers do not sufficiently anticipate problems and prescribe preventive measures, and there appears to be very little link between the process of doing research and the implementation of research findings. As well, policy-makers are asking for policy-relevant research and knowledge 'generated and sustained in the context of application, and not developed first and then applied to that context later by a different group of practitioners' (Gibbon, 1998). They are looking for more 'flexible ways of integrating research into programmes so that the benefits from learning can be applied during, not after the event' (AID-Watch, 1999). This is a departure from or perhaps just an extension of the traditional practice that assumes that:

> It is mistaken to expect university research to produce marketable results, for it is essentially fundamental research. It is the entrepreneur who can convert the fundamental research findings into commercial products through applied research conducted in their own laboratories or undertaken in the universities under their sponsorship (Biobaku, 1985).

Policy-makers and practitioners on the demand side also create problems for the dialogue and co-operation that should exist between them and academic researchers. They often seem to regard academic research contemptuously as esoteric, and as not taking into account the politics and economics of policy-making, which involve reconciling conflicting social and commercial interests. Objective and scientifically based research findings may turn out to be politically awkward or commercially inconvenient to these various vested interests. For this reason it is common for government or business interests to hire their own consultants or set up their own commissions of inquiry or task forces (suitably composed), with specified terms of reference, to look into this or that matter, and provide policy advice. Such a report is then vetted, and a 'white paper' issued to guide official decisions and action. In fact, the 1988 Civil Service Reform in Nigeria requires government ministries to set up their own research and policy analysis unit within the ministries, rather than get involved in the complications of academic research (Ikpi & Olayemi, 1997). This sort of 'captive science' tends to restrict the independence and objectivity of the researcher, and is therefore not entirely acceptable to the academic social scientist (Glover, 1995; MacNeil, 1990; Garrett & Islam, 1998; Edwards, 1996). Besides, there has

104

been considerable incoherence and many inconsistencies in the policy-making process in Nigeria, resulting from frequent changes of government and policy directions since the end of the Nigerian civil war.

Worse still, most bilateral and multilateral donor agencies and their aid programmes often have heavily funded consultancy components that employ tens of thousands of 'foreign experts'. Sometimes this pattern of technical assistance reinforces the problems of dependency as it underrates local knowledge, and undermines the local capacity-building efforts. The consultancy-dominated approach to aid and development co-operation has been heavily criticized for being ineffective, and for its tendency 'to find local problems to suit pre-packaged assumptions and solutions' rather than empirically ascertain the local perceptions of what the problems and priorities are, and incorporate local knowledge and expertise in the process of solving the problems (Association for the Development of Education in Africa, 1998; Mkandawire, 1998; Mascelli & Sottas, 1996). A recent critic has observed that:

> more than 100,000 expatriates from Europe and North America are currently working in Sub-Saharan Africa, mostly for the World Bank, the USAID and Development organizations; this number is far greater than the one at independence in 1960. More than 4 billion USD is being spent annually in Africa on foreign technical assistance primarily for policy analysis and consultations (Atteh, 1996, p. 36, from a World Bank report).

There is also concern that the culture of heavily funded consultancy and contract research may dilute and undermine the character and rigour of academic research, with project reports, feasibility reports and consultancy evaluation reports replacing or otherwise affecting the tradition of scientific inquiry (Buchert & King, 1996, especially p. 105–11). The challenge again is: how to get policy-makers and academic researchers to appreciate the culture, needs and constraints of each other; how to preserve the essence of research and yet make it more useful and responsive to political and other practical realities; how to maintain an appropriate balance between basic and reflective research on the one hand, and the pressure for relevant policy and applied research on the other.

There is a further and even more worrying concern that both researchers and policy-makers do not take sufficiently seriously the interests and views of the people whom research and development are meant to benefit. 'Much conventional research is useless because it is for the satisfaction of the researcher rather than the researched' (Edwards, 1989). This is the basis for the call for a more participatory and bottom-up approach to research and development, and a more active outreach and extension component of our development studies programmes.

Rethinking the role and mission of higher education

One has to be a really optimistic person not to give up on the current state of higher education in Nigeria; but the situation could provide the challenge and opportunity needed to review the mission of higher education and the role of the social sciences.

There is no lack of ideas on the main elements of the reform that is required. The international development community, including the World Bank, now appears to be as concerned as national governments to find ways to revive and stabilize the system. The various working groups of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), in collaboration with the Association of African Universities (AAU), UNESCO, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, and various independent research organizations, foundations and aid agencies, have generated numerous ideas and recommendations about what needs to be done by national governments, the international community and the tertiary institutions themselves (see the various newsletters and reports of the AAU and the ADEA; Association of African Universities & World Bank, 1997; Sanyal et al., 1995; Coombe, 1991). What seem to be lacking are the political will and the resources to bring about the needed changes.

We have observed that funding and control are at the heart of the problem. Some analysts believe that the first step in the recovery process is to 'tame the State' and reorder government priorities. Most tertiary institutions are 80% funded from the public purse, and there is the temptation for government to regard them as mere parastatal organizations or an extension of the state apparatus over which they have the right of control and discipline—as in the appointment of governing councils, key administrators, and even over decisions about admission levels, the conditions of service of staff, and so on. And these are precisely the main areas of friction as staff and students often vigorously assert their rights and resist what they perceive as official high-handedness and infringement of academic freedom and autonomy. It is not easy to say what the right balance should be between institutional autonomy and state control, as the pattern varies in different countries, depending on the political system and leadership style. The centralized and authoritarian pattern of military rule in Nigeria involved a repressive system of control that is different from what one should expect in a democratic and truly federal setting. In any event, the ultimate goal is to promote constructive dialogue, understanding and partnership between government and higher education institutions through the development of, for instance, joint projects and programmes, reciprocal membership of committees and boards, the exchange of personnel on short-term secondments, etc., so that government can gradually and with greater confidence move from direct control to supervision through effective intermediary bodies. As one analyst has observed:

> Government and society must recognize that the role of universities has always been to challenge the status quo. The nature of their work is to inquire and to seek better understanding. In the process they may also annoy or provoke; but this has always been a recognized risk for any nation that chooses to establish its own university (Association of African Universities & World Bank, 1997).

For their part the institutions of higher education have much cleaning up and catching up to do in order to redeem their tattered image and earn the trust and goodwill of both government and the people. They need to review their roles and mission,

106

and update their programmes and methods of management. They must improve upon the internal mechanisms for self-regulation and accountability in order to forestall much of the present tendency of government to subject them to needless scrutiny and interference. This means that they must become more transparent, cost-effective, democratic and decentralized in the way they operate. They must uphold and not compromise the high ideals of the 'ivory tower', but shed the negative and pejorative connotations associated with the ivory tower image. Also, the creeping aberrations of tribalism, statism and clannishness on our campuses should be firmly discouraged because they tend to create vested interests in mediocrity.

Attention has been called time and again to the need for strategic planning to establish priorities and rationalize programmes, and to establish national and regional centres of excellence as a way to reduce costs and pool resources and expertise for greater effectiveness and impact. Unfortunately, the roles and missions of our universities, polytechnics and colleges of education appear to be getting more and more diffused as they increasingly stray from their main functions in order to raise extra money! The proliferation of federal, state and now private universities has meant the multiplication and duplication of courses and programmes even in institutions which were established with a specialized professional, technological or agricultural focus in mind (Ngara 1995; Ajayi et al., 1996).

Underfunding is at the heart of all this confusion. Universities and other tertiary institutions must find ways to legitimately generate more of the money they need, and lessen their dependence on state support. The cost of running the system should be shared equitably between government, the beneficiaries and other stakeholders. The institutions themselves are urged to diversify their sources of income, to become more entrepreneurial, and to commercialize their knowledge and expertise in order to raise more money to refurbish their academic infrastructure and services. Up to a point this is valid, and government and donors should help to strengthen and utilize local research capacity rather than undermine it by undue reliance on outside consultants. Some of the mindless expansion of student enrolments as a means to raise money could be counter-productive. Ways must be found to increase access to tertiary education without sacrificing quality and to establish a healthy balance between enrolment and facilities, even if this means reduced enrolment in some of the traditional fields of study. The limited resources available should not be diverted from the primary academic areas of teaching and research to the provision of municipal and other auxiliary services, or for the provision of remedial and other programmes which may be adequately provided by other sectors or levels of the education system. Part of this rethinking implies substantial changes in the social sciences.

Restructuring the social sciences for greater relevance

We have drawn attention to the diverse ways in which the social sciences are categorized in different places, and to the problem of communication and comprehension among scientists, and between them and policy-makers and administrators.

The problems of duplication and overlap in the various disciplines and sub-disciplines are too well known to require further comment. Obviously, there is a need to reconsider the organization and update the methods of social science in order to enhance its status and improve its social relevance and impact.

The emerging trends in social science thinking favour greater communication across the traditional disciplines, and with the wider non-academic public, and a move from the disciplinary tradition of narrow specialization to a broad and more flexible transdisciplinary approach. As a critic has recently observed, 'it is no longer valid for researchers to remain entrenched within the boundaries of their own disciplines (as) the process of development is beyond the analytical capacities of any single discipline'. The 1995 Wallerstein Commission on the social sciences questioned the logic of the present disciplinary divisions, and showed that 'the level of consensus concerning the traditional disciplines has diminished'. The report urged social scientists to innovate, and to 'amplify the organization of intellectual activity without attention to current disciplinary boundaries':

> To be historical is after all not the exclusive purview of persons called historians. It is an obligation of all social scientists [...] Economic issues are not the exclusive purview of economists. Economic questions are central to any and all social scientific analysis. Nor is it absolutely sure that professional historians necessarily know more about historical explanation, sociologists more about social issues, and economists more about economic fluctuations than other working social scientists. In short, we do not believe that there are monopolies of wisdom or zones of knowledge reserved to persons with particular university degrees (Wallerstein et al., 1998).

Professor Ali Mazrui had earlier cautioned about the uncritical adoption of the 'conventional western disciplinary categories' in African universities. He recommended instead problem-based and policy-oriented classifications such as the 'school of rural studies', 'school of urban studies' and similar structures now used for area studies and development studies in some parts of the world. He also prescribed other ways to emancipate Africa culturally by diversifying the external models and influences on our education system, and by domesticating Western and other external ideas and forms which we choose to adopt (Mazrui, 1992). Other educationists have proposed how staff and students should be made to establish multiple departmental affiliations in their institutions, and how interdisciplinary research groups and clusters could be formed to work together on specific issues and problems over a given period of time. This approach is already increasingly being adopted in several parts of the academic world.

While considering these long-term goals, our institutions of higher education should urgently seek to promote their national and African cultural character, without of course diminishing their international outlook and standing. As they rightly aspire to international standards and ideals they must reckon with local conditions and needs without undermining the culture and ideals of academia. More emphasis should be placed on such issues of current concern as the need for unity, justice

and inter-ethnic harmony; a home-grown model of democracy and human rights based on African cultural values; and poverty alleviation, national self-reliance and the other development objectives enunciated in our Second National Development Plan, 1970–75, in the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy in our Constitution, in VISION 2010, and in other more recent policy initiatives and development programmes.

Social scientists should not only align themselves and their programmes with national development goals, but should also press for a greater role in the policy-making process, and take a more active interest in the implementation of their research findings. They should anticipate development issues and problems and provide timely advice, and not wait for 'post-mortem' analysis and commentary after the event. Through their teaching, research and public debates they should seek to produce good, competent and patriotic graduates and citizens through whom the quality of the country's public administration and governance will be enhanced.

Concluding remarks

To conclude, national development involves much more than the state of higher education and the quality of policy advice offered by the social scientists. It has to contend with the many internal problems of underdevelopment, especially internal mismanagement, and with the heavy constraints imposed by the international economic environment. The goals of national development in Nigeria have been outlined and highlighted time and again; sadly, the record of our national performance has been dismal, especially during the 'lost decades' of the 1980s and 1990s. Internal instability and lack of will provide part of the explanation, but the more fundamental problem is that African governments seem to have lost control of the policy-making process, and are under pressure to accept dictation from creditor nations and international financial institutions. Our governments now tend to discuss development issues less with their own nationals, and more with donors and creditors: about debt repayment, debt relief and rescheduling, and paradoxically about more development assistance. Contradictory as it may seem, our institutions of higher education need large doses of assistance and support from the international community to rehabilitate their crumbling academic infrastructure, and to facilitate access to modern research and analytical techniques, equipment and scholarly literature. Bilateral and multilateral organizations concerned with higher education should provide appropriate levels of support to strengthen local capacity through training in planning and management, international (North–South and South–South) academic exchanges, inter-university linkages and other forms of collaboration that help to build ties of genuine partnership and reduce the existing problems of dependence.

Note

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110

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BENJAMIN BLOOM

1913–99

Elliot W. Eisner

About five feet five inches (1.65 m) in height, Ben Bloom was not a very large man, but his physical stature in no way reflected his presence in a room or the stature he achieved in the field of education. It was, I confess, a kind of anomaly to see someone who had few physically imposing qualities carry so much weight in a conversation and with so much of an aura.

Benjamin S. Bloom was born on 21 February 1913 in Lansford, Pennsylvania, and died on 13 September 1999. He received a bachelor's and master's degree from Pennsylvania State University in 1935 and a Ph.D. in Education from the University of Chicago in March 1942. He became a staff member of the Board of Examinations at the University of Chicago in 1940 and served in that capacity until 1943, at which time he became university examiner, a position he held until 1959.

His initial appointment as an instructor in the Department of Education at the University of Chicago began in 1944 and he was eventually appointed Charles H. Swift Distinguished Service Professor in 1970. He served as educational adviser to the governments of Israel, India and numerous other nations. These are some of the facts pertaining to his life and career. To know the man and his work, however, we must delve into what he stood for and what he accomplished as a teacher, a scholar and a researcher in the field of education. That is the story I would like to tell.

Original language: English

Elliot W. Eisner (United States of America)
Lee Jacks Professor of Education and Professor of Art at Stanford University. He has lectured throughout the world on the development of aesthetic intelligence. His major publications include *The enlightened eye: qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice* (1991), *Cognition and curriculum reconsidered*, 2nd ed. (1994), *The educational imagination: on the design and evaluation of school programs*, 3rd ed. (1994) and *The kind of schools we need* (1998). He studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Institute of Design of the Illinois Institute of Technology, and the University of Chicago. He has served as president of the National Art Education Association in the United States, the International Society for Education Through Art, the American Educational Research Association and the John Dewey Society.

Bloom as a teacher

I had my first contact with Ben Bloom as a student in the Department of Education at the University of Chicago. He was one of my teachers. The course, and I remember it quite well, was entitled 'Education as a Field of Study'. Our aim in that course was to try to understand the kinds of questions that might be asked about the field of education and to explore the various ways in which those questions might be answered. It was a mixture of the conceptual analysis of a complex concept and an introduction to the forms of inquiry that would result in a research project. One aspect of the course focused on the use of statistics and the calculation of probability. The approach that Bloom took was to help us understand probability experientially. Unlike most instructors, who would be inclined to provide a theoretical explanation of the meaning of probability, Bloom had each of us toss coins and record the number of heads and tails produced in a number of trials. He then had the class combine their respective 'scores', which of course yielded a relatively smooth bell-shaped curve describing the distribution of occasions on which heads or tails appeared.

His willingness to devote the time in a graduate class to the actual production of an event in order to increase the meaningfulness of the idea of probability was emblematic of what always seemed to me to be a kind of hard-nosed progressivism that characterized his orientation to education and especially to the assessment of the educational consequences he thought important.

Bloom's strength as a teacher was not due to the fact that he was the most articulate on the faculty at Chicago at the time; he was not. It was not because he necessarily invented the most creative learning activities that graduate students might engage in; he did not. What Bloom had to offer his students was a model of an inquiring scholar, someone who embraced the idea that education as a process was an effort to realize human potential; indeed, even more, it was an effort designed to make potential possible. Education was an exercise in optimism.

Bloom's commitment to the possibilities of education provided for many of us who studied with him a kind of inspiration. He was, as I have indicated, an optimist, but an optimist who looked to the facts and who designed the studies to give substance to his aspirations.

I do not think I will ever forget being in a class of his in which the doctoral students enrolled were asked to present proposals for their dissertations or to describe pilot studies they had completed in preparation for their dissertation research. The weeks passed and it was my turn to present. My dissertation was to focus on the measurement of types of creativity displayed in two- and three-dimensional artwork made by children aged 10 and 11. The criteria for identifying each of the four types of creativity I had conceptualized were both complex and subtle; the tasks confronting the judges were to make judgements on subtle but important aspects of the creative features of the students' artwork. Alas, the inter-judge correlations turned out to be in the forties and there were some snickers from my peers when I put these

coefficients on the chalkboard. Bloom was slightly irritated by the responses of my fellow students and proceeded to the blackboard to show to my surprise and theirs how significant such correlations were in the light of the complexity of the tasks the judges were asked to perform. He taught me in that demonstration the importance of supporting students in difficult times and of putting statistics in context. How one interprets a set of numbers depends not only on matters of measurement but also on the characteristics of the situation from which those numbers were derived. That was a lesson I do not think I will ever forget.

Another feature of Ben Bloom's pedagogy most often emerged in one-to-one conversations in his office on the third floor of Judd Hall on the campus of the University of Chicago. His office was not an aesthetic delight. It had one wonderful black and white photograph of his mentor, Ralph W. Tyler, hanging on the wall. The rest of the office was strewn with books, papers, journal articles, and a sundry array of this and that having neither particular rhyme nor reason as far as I could tell. But it also had a large chalkboard, and it was in conversations on a one-to-one basis with Ben Bloom that one could experience his obvious pleasure in illustrating on the chalkboard relationships that he expected to find or had already found in research. In these conversations the excitement of research-oriented inquiry was made palpable. It was clear that he was in love with the process of finding out, and finding out is what I think he did best.

The cognitive taxonomy

One of Bloom's great talents was having a nose for what is significant. His most important initial work focused on what might be called 'the operationalization of educational objectives'. As I have mentioned, Ralph W. Tyler was his mentor. When Bloom came to Chicago he worked with Tyler in the examiner's office and directed his attention to the development of specifications through which educational objectives could be organized according to their cognitive complexity. If such an organization or hierarchy could be developed, university examiners might have a more reliable procedure for assessing students and the outcomes of educational practice. What resulted from this work is *Taxonomy of educational objectives: Handbook I, the cognitive domain* (Bloom et al., 1956), a publication that has been used throughout the world to assist in the preparation of evaluation materials.

The cognitive taxonomy is predicated on the idea that cognitive operations can be ordered into six increasingly complex levels. What is taxonomic about the taxonomy is that each subsequent level depends upon the student's ability to perform at the level or levels that precede it. For example, the ability to evaluate—the highest level in the cognitive taxonomy—is predicated on the assumption that for the student to be able to evaluate, he or she would need to have the necessary information, understand the information he or she had, be able to apply it, be able to analyse it, synthesize it and then eventually evaluate it. The taxonomy was no mere classification scheme. It was an effort to hierarchically order cognitive processes.

One of the consequences of the categories in the taxonomy is that they not only serve as means through which evaluation tasks could be formulated, but also

provide a framework for the formulation of the objectives themselves. Bloom was interested in providing a useful practical tool that was congruent with what was understood at that time about the features of the higher mental processes.

The publication of the cognitive taxonomy was followed by the publication of the affective taxonomy. Bloom's work was a signal contribution to mapping the terrain that educators were interested in developing.

Bloom's contributions to education extended well beyond the taxonomy. He was fundamentally interested in thinking and its development. His work with Broder (Bloom & Broder, 1958) on the study of the thought processes of college students was another innovative and significant effort to get into the heads of students through a process of stimulated recall and think aloud techniques. What Bloom wanted to reveal was what students were thinking about when teachers were teaching, because he recognized that it was what students were experiencing that ultimately mattered. The use of think aloud protocols provided an important basis for gaining insight into the black box.

Mastery learning

The features that characterize Ben Bloom's scholarship are several. First, as I have indicated, he was interested in understanding the ways in which cognition functions and, more important, how high-level forms of thinking can be promoted. Second, he had an abiding faith in the power of the environment to influence the performance of individuals. He was no genetically oriented determinist. His convictions about environmental influences led, ultimately, to the impact that his work had in establishing the Head Start Program in the United States. He was invited to testify to the Congress of the United States about the importance of the first four years of the child's life as the critical time to promote cognitive development. His testimony had an impact. Third, Bloom believed that not only was the environment important, but also that it was possible to arrange systematically the ways in which learning could be promoted. Mastery learning (Block, 1971), rooted initially in the work of John Carroll, is a good example of his effort and his abiding faith in the power of rationally defined goals to promote the attainment of those goals through instruction.

For at least a century, the way to approach the measurement and description of students' academic achievement had been to expect a normal distribution and then to compare students' performance. Those students who made the fewest mistakes or achieved the highest levels received A grades, while those somewhat less stellar in their performance received B grades. Most students received C grades, those less than average received D grades and those whose performance was not sufficient to achieve a pass were given an F grade. The assumption was that there would always be a normal distribution among students and that this distribution and the students' location within it should determine their rewards—rewards distributed in the form of grades.

Bloom looked at the matter differently. Under the influence of Ralph Tyler he recognized that what was important in education was not that students should be

compared, but that they should be helped to achieve the goals of the curriculum they were studying. Goal attainment rather than student comparison was what was important. The process of teaching needed to be geared towards the design of tasks that would progressively and ineluctably lead to the realization of the objectives that defined the goals of the curriculum. Mastery learning is an encomium to such a conception. The variable that needed to be addressed, as Bloom saw it, was time. It made no pedagogical sense to expect all students to take the same amount of time to achieve the same objectives. There were individual differences among students, and the important thing was to accommodate those differences in order to promote learning rather than to hold time constant and to expect some students to fail. Education was not a race. In addition, students were allowed, indeed encouraged, to help one other. Feedback and correction were immediate. In short, what Ben Bloom was doing was applying in a very rational way the basic assumptions embraced by those who believe the educational process should be geared towards the realization of educational objectives. He believed that such an approach to curriculum, to teaching and to assessment would enable virtually all youngsters to achieve success in school. The problem lay in curriculum design and in the forms of teaching that were appropriate to promoting the realization of the goals.

His convictions about the power of the environment to influence human performance are perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in his book *Developing talent in young people* (Bloom et al., 1985). In it he showed that even world-famous high-achieving adults—champion tennis players, mathematicians and scientists, award-winning writers—were seldom regarded as child prodigies. What made the difference, Bloom discovered, was the kind of attention and support those individuals received at home from their parents. Champion tennis players, for example, profited from the instruction of increasingly able teachers of tennis during the course of their childhood. Because of this and the amount of time and energy they expended in learning to play championship tennis, they realized goals born of guidance and effort rather than raw genetic capacity. Attainment was a product of learning, and learning was influenced by opportunity and effort. It was then, and is now, a powerful and optimistic conception of the possibilities that education provides.

It is important to note that in many ways Bloom's research on 'giftedness' undermines the typical conception of giftedness. 'Giftedness' typically connotes the possession of an ability that others do not have. A gift suggests something special that is largely the result of a genetically conferred ability. Like pregnancy, a gift is something you either have or do not have. While Bloom recognized that some individuals, idiot savants for example, had remarkable special abilities, the use of such a model of human ability converted the educators' role from inventing ways to optimize human aptitude into activities mainly concerned with matters of identification and selection. The latter process was itself predicated on the notion that cream would rise to the top. The educator's mission, Bloom believed, was to arrange the environmental conditions to help realize whatever aptitudes individuals possessed.

Furthermore, he recognized that there is hardly any human trait that is dichotomously distributed. Abilities are related to the kinds of interactions that individuals

had with their environment and the development of appropriate environments is central to the realization of potentialities. Thus, giftedness was a concept that had problematic associations if it was seen essentially as a matter of all or nothing at all or if it defined the educator's role as that of someone concerned primarily with the identification of ability rather than with its development. Again, Bloom's view of the realization of human ability presented an optimistic role for the educator.

Many of his students also studied the impact of environment on student performance. Dave (Dave, 1963), for example, studied the educational environment of the home and in attempting to account for differences in achievements between siblings discovered that one needed to talk not so simply about the educational environment of the home, but rather about the educational environment for particular people in the home. He found that parents often provided different opportunities and support because of different expectations for each of their children. What is provided and withheld impacts on what students are able to learn and do, not only at school but also in life outside school.

Privilege and performance

One of Bloom's most important works is his study of stability and change in human characteristics (Bloom, 1964). He found that it was possible to predict with considerable accuracy—around .8—the probable location, in a distribution of measured achievement, of the position of individuals from data on their performance obtained years earlier. By the second grade or at about the age of 7, the academic position of a student or students when they reached early adolescence could be predicted. Rather than regarding this stability as a manifestation of genetic determinism, what Bloom concluded was that such determinism could be undermined by effective teaching. By conceiving of the curriculum as a way to promote learning if organized sequentially and if supported by appropriate forms of instruction and variability in time, all students could be helped to achieve educational goals.

Bloom's view of learning is iconoclastic. Basically, his message to the educational world is to focus on target attainment and to abandon a horse-race model of schooling that has as its major aim the identification of those who are swiftest. Speed is not the issue, achievement or mastery is, and it is that model that should be employed in trying to develop educational programmes for the young. Mastery learning was an expression of what Bloom believed to be an optimistic approach to the realization of educational goals. The traditional expectations of a bell-shaped distribution of human performance was, more often than not, a reflection of social privilege and social class. Children who enjoyed the benefits of habits, attitudes, linguistic skills and cognitive abilities available to the more privileged members of society were likely to do well at school on tasks for which those attitudes and skills were relevant. To confer additional privileges on those who already had a head start was to create an array of inequities that would eventually exact extraordinary social costs. And since environment plays such an important role in providing opportunity to those already privileged, it seemed reasonable to believe that by providing the kind

of support that the privileged already enjoyed to those who did not have it, a positive difference in their performance would be made.

Institution-building

Bloom's scholarship in education was complemented by his activism. By activism I mean that he played a major role in creating the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and in organizing the International Seminar for Advanced Training in Curriculum Development, held in Granna, Sweden, in the summer of 1971. His work in the IEA, since its inception over thirty years ago, has had a significant impact on the efforts being made internationally to improve students' learning in the dozens of countries that are members of the IEA.

What is striking about Bloom's views on international comparisons is that he was aware, perhaps more than most, of the complexity of student performance and of the danger of oversimplifying it on the basis of scores alone. One needed to know about much more than the magnitude of test scores in order to make educational sense out of them. One needed to understand the amount of time allocated to the study of the subject, one needed to understand the resources provided to schools, and one needed to understand the quality of teaching that was made available. Bloom was no mere number-cruncher. He understood full well that the environment matters and that the ability to interpret test scores without understanding the environment in which those scores were produced made no real sense at all. Alas, his admonishments about such matters have not always been heeded, bearing in mind the penchant in the United States to display league tables of school performance.

His efforts in the curriculum field to improve the quality of student learning received a major push in the curriculum development seminar held in Sweden in 1971. Teams from over thirty countries participated in that seminar. Individuals from these nations more often than not had little background in the curriculum field and often used materials and approaches to teaching in school that seldom required more than forms of rote learning. The relevance of differences among students, differences in geographical and physical context, and differences in forms of pedagogy was seldom considered as nations cranked out uniform syllabi that provided little assistance to teachers with respect to how curriculum content might be organized and how teaching might proceed.

The seminar on curriculum development was intended to provide a substantial boost to empower those with limited training in curriculum development. Furthermore, with such exposure, team members from the nations in attendance were expected to return to their countries at the end of the six-week seminar to build curriculum centres by means of which more effective materials and pedagogical approaches could be developed. Bloom saw the seminar as a way to begin a process of institution-building, the institution of the National Curriculum Center. Centres in Israel and in India are examples of the fruits of his leadership in this domain.

Institution-building for Bloom was not restricted to institutions away from home. In the Department of Education at the University of Chicago, he almost single-hand-

edly developed the MESA (Measurement, Evaluation and Statistical Analysis) programme. This programme was designed to prepare scholars who had the quantitative and analytical skills to think through in great depth what needed to be addressed in order to design genuinely informative and educationally useful evaluation practices. The alumni of this programme are currently stars in the system. The genius of the programme was that it never confused statistical and educational significance. Always at the forefront were questions having to do with the educational value of what was being addressed; Bloom's students were no mere technicians. His commitment to the possibilities and potential of education as an exercise in optimism infused his views about how young scholars should be prepared in the field of evaluation.

Ben Bloom's activism and leadership in education did not stop with his major contributions to the IEA. Nor did it stop with the Seminar for Advanced Training in Curriculum Development. It went beyond the organization of the MESA programme in the Department of Education at the University of Chicago. He also served as chairman of the research and development committees of the College Entrance Examinations Board and was elected President of the American Educational Research Association in 1965. Scholars recognized the stature of this physically small man from Chicago and honoured him with appointments, honorary degrees, medals and election to office. He had a nose for the significant, and he had the rare ability to formulate research problems that responded to what he believed to be significant.

Ben Bloom not only provided a model of scholarship, he also provided to those who had the good fortune to work with him a kind of inspiration, an opportunity to see someone deeply engaged in the satisfactions of his work and infinitely convinced of the possibilities of education. He left an imprint that will not soon erode. The field of education, and more important, the lives of many children and adolescents are better off because of the contributions he made.

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120

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Volume XIV Number 2 April 2000

CONTENTS

Articles	*Page*
M.R. NARAYANA: Determinants of Students' Performance in Aided Private Degree Colleges	133
HEMKHOTHANG LHUNGDIM: Aspirations of Adolescents and their Implications for Educational Planning	155
GEORGE PSACHAROPOULOS and ROBERT MATTSON: Family Size, Education Expenditure and Attainment in a Poor Country	169
Research Notes/Communications	
T. LAKSHMANASAMY: Household Costs and Willingness to Pay for Higher Education	187
M. MUZAMMIL: Political Economy of the Grants-in-Aid to Education in Uttar Pradesh	197
Book Reviews	
V.P. GARG: Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century (UNESCO); R.S. TYAGI: Education and the 21st Century Citizen (T. Poje); R.P. SINGH: Management Theories for Educational Change (M. Keith); FURQAN QAMAR: Public Expenditure Management Handbook (World Bank); USHA JAYACHANDRAN: Education for All in India (A.C. Mehta); TAPAN R. MOHANTY: The Global Education Industry (J. Tooley); S.M.I.A. ZAIDI: Plight of Minorities (R.N. Thakur); R.P. SINGH: The Academic Administrator and the Law (F.D. Toma & L.P. Richard); A.M. NALLA GOUNDEN: Economics of Productivity (E.N. Wolff (ed.)); JANDHYALA B.G. TILAK: Education Policy (J. Marshall & M. Peters, eds)	203

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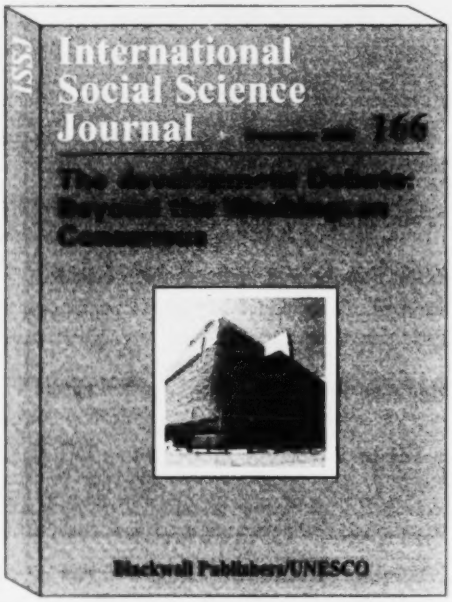

Contents / N° 166 / December 2000

The Development Debate: Beyond the Washington Consensus

Rubens Ricupero
Putting a human face on development

Branislav Gosovic
Global intellectual hegemony and the international development agenda

Christian Comeliau
The limitless growth assumption

Alexander Nekipelov
The Washington Consensus and Russian economic policy

Jacques Sapir
The Washington Consensus and transition in Russia: history of a failure

Philippe Hugon
Growth, crisis and recovery in East Asia

C. Rammanohar Reddy
India, the Washington Consensus and the East Asian crisis

Luciano Coutinho
Overcoming crises resulting from adherence to the Washington Consensus: lessons from the Republic of Korea and Brazil

José Antonio Ocampo
A broad agenda for international financial reform

Open Forum

Nicolai Genov
Global trends and Eastern European societal transformations

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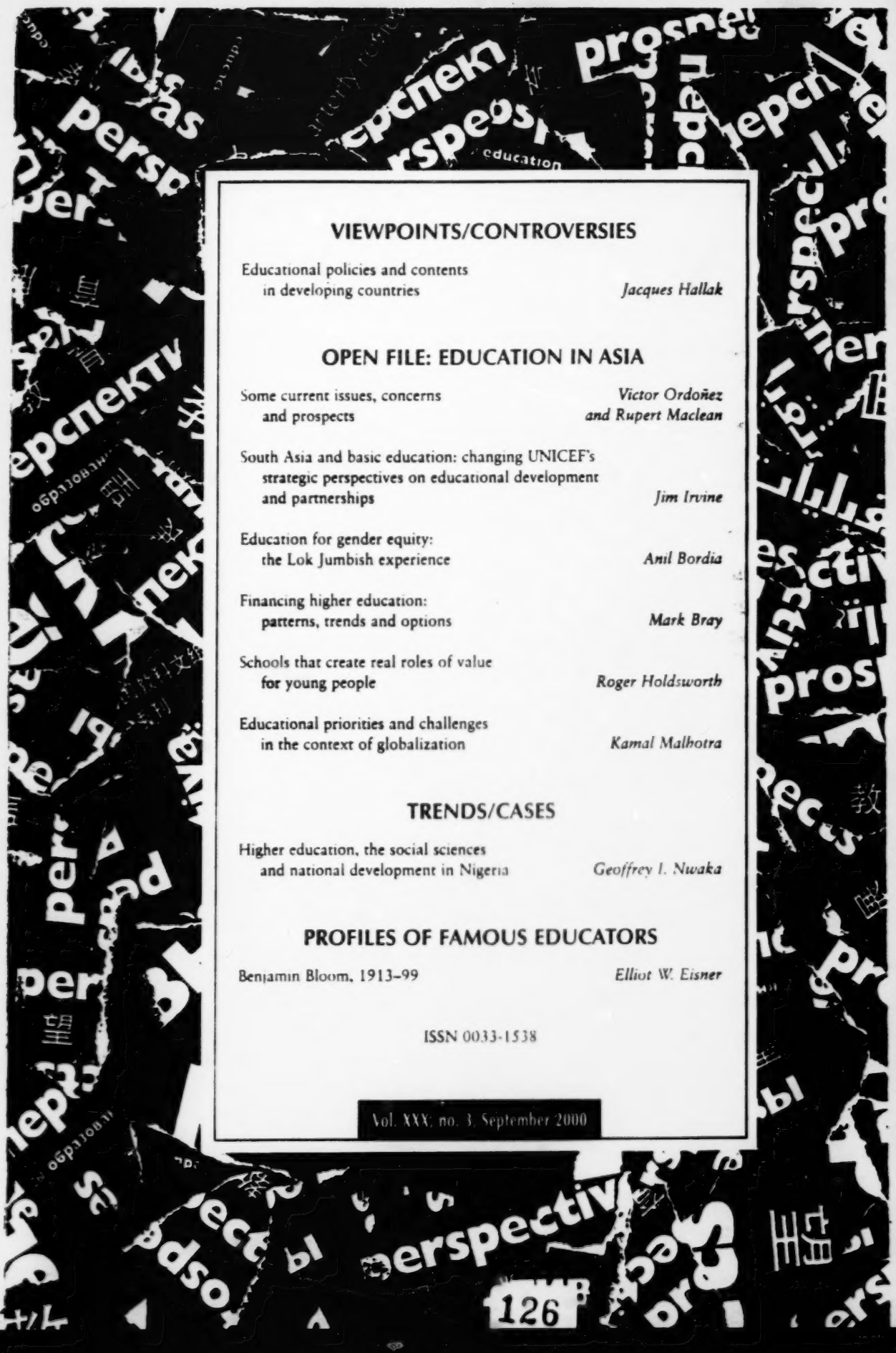

VIEWPOINTS/CONTROVERSIES

Educational policies and contents in developing countries — *Jacques Hallak*

OPEN FILE: EDUCATION IN ASIA

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South Asia and basic education: changing UNICEF's strategic perspectives on educational development and partnerships — *Jim Irvine*

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TRENDS/CASES

Higher education, the social sciences and national development in Nigeria — *Geoffrey I. Nwaka*

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